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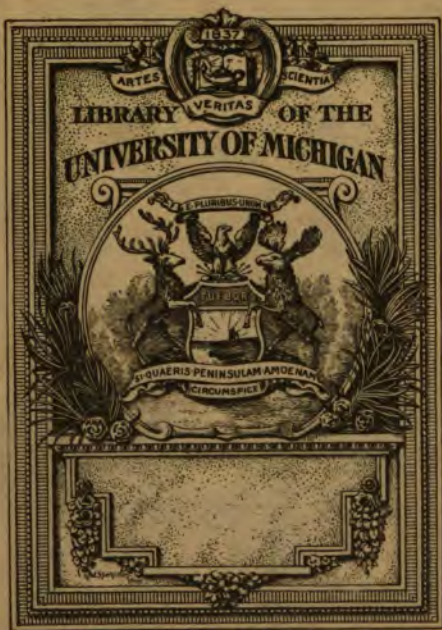
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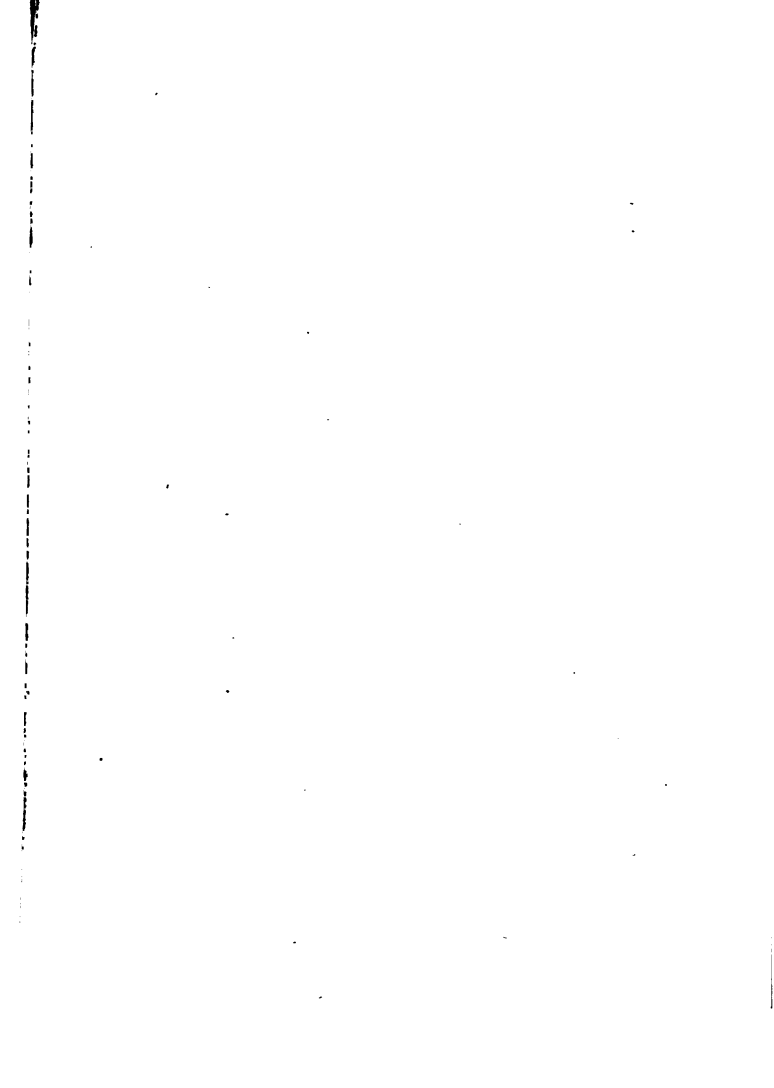
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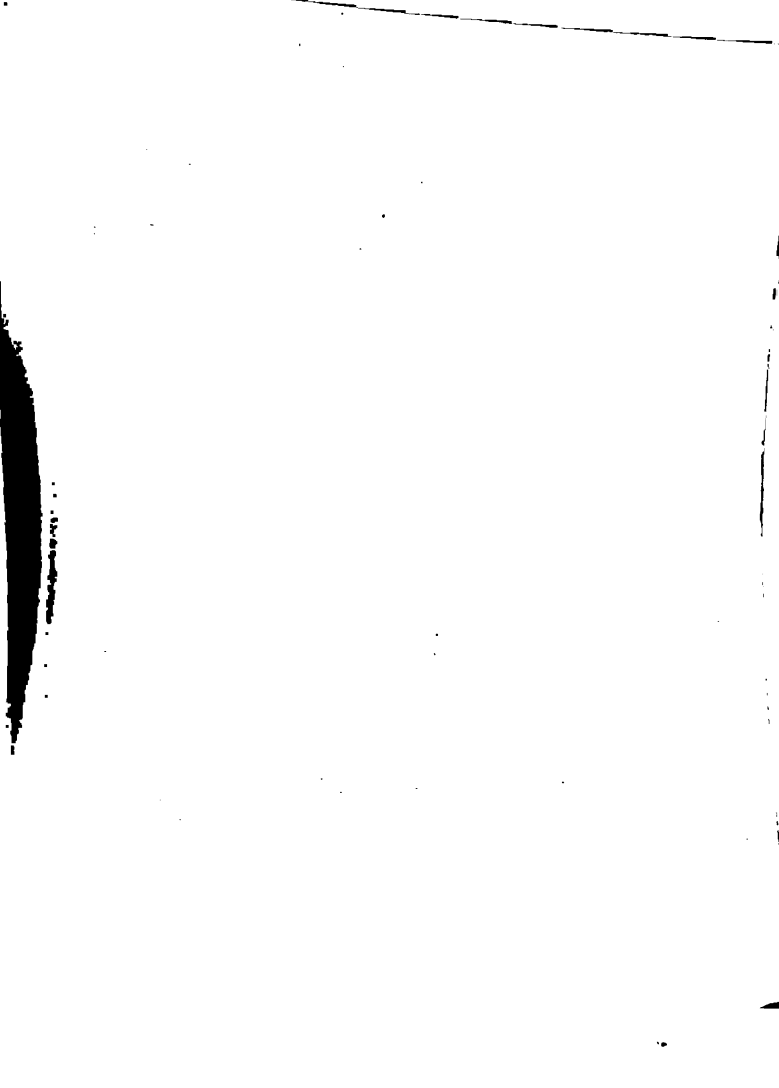




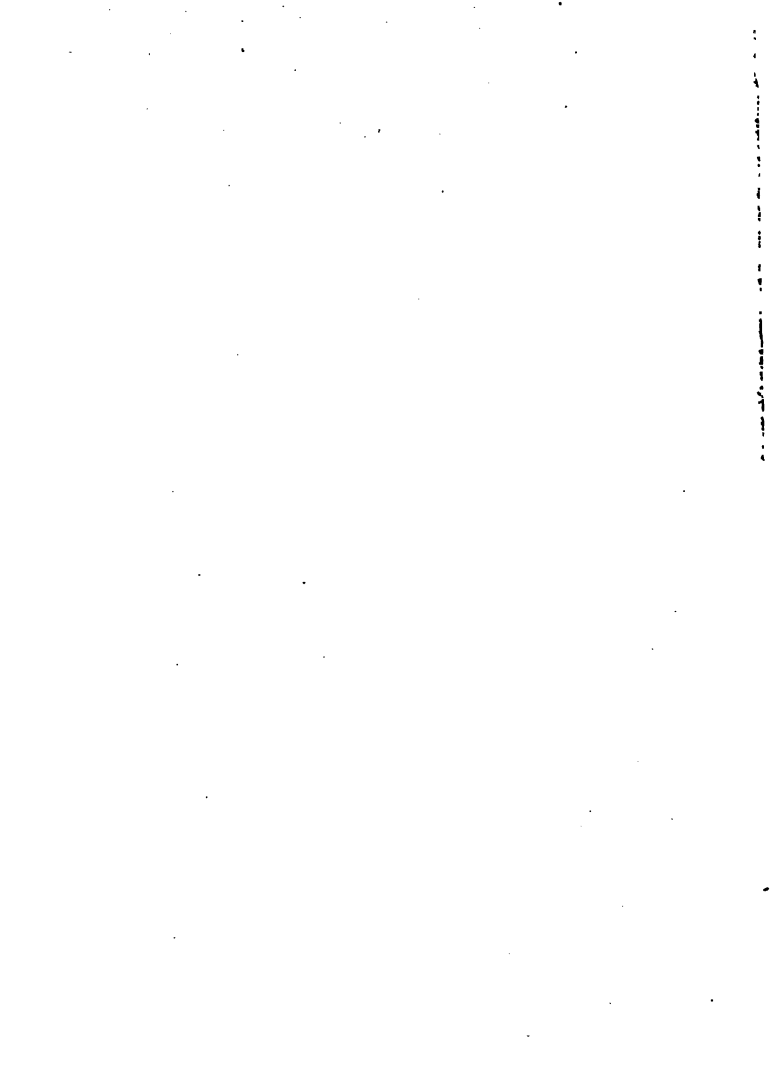


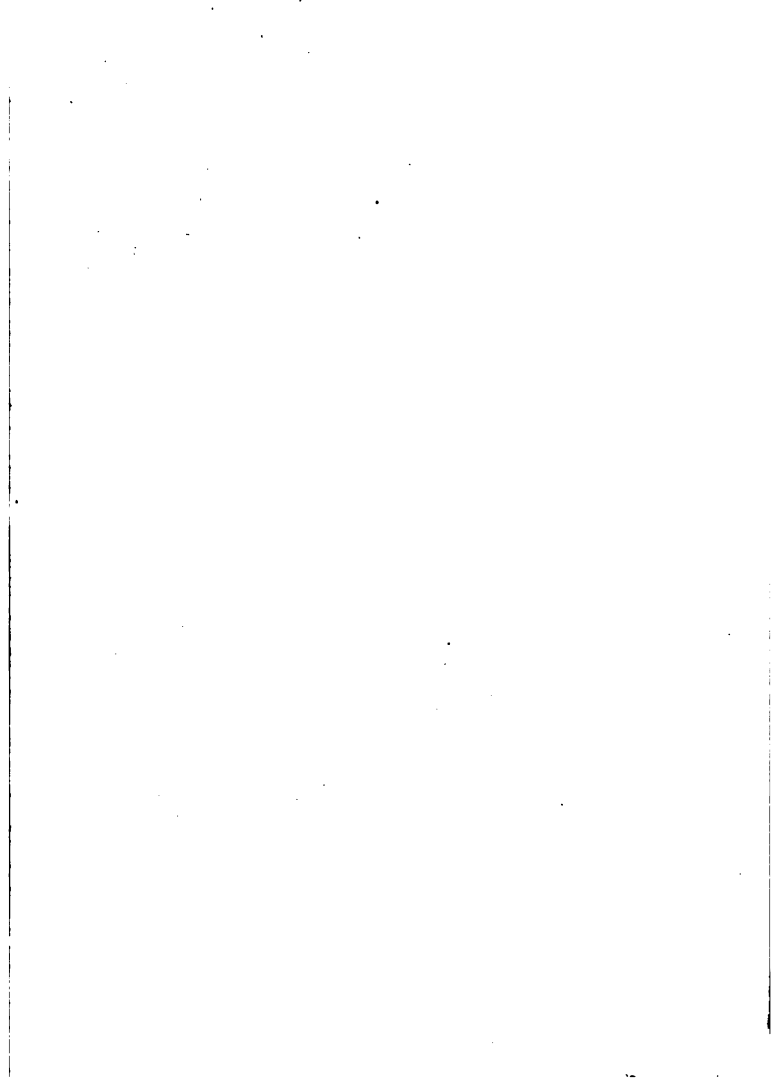












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**AUTOBIOGRAPHY.**

MEMOIRS

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OF

JEAN FRANÇOIS MARMONTEL.

WITH AN ESSAY

By WILLIAM D. HOWELLS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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**MEMOIRS**  
**OF**  
**JEAN FRANÇOIS MARMONTEL.**

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**BOOK VII.**

My adventure with the Duke d'Aumont had done me two essential services: it had induced me to renounce a project of marriage lightly formed, and of which I have since had reason to believe that I should have repented; and it had sown for me in the breast of Bouvart the seeds of that friendship which has been so salutary to me. But these good offices were not the only ones which the Duke d'Aumont rendered me by his persecution.

In the first place, my mind, enfeebled by the dissipation of Paris, of Avenay, of Passy, and of Versailles, needed some adverse fortune to restore its ancient temper and the elasticity it had lost: the Duke d'Aumont had taken care to give new vigor to my courage and character. In the second place, without employing me very seriously, the Mercury never ceased to hold my attention captive, to consume my time, to steal me

from myself, to prevent me from undertaking anything honorable to my talents, and to subject them to a minute and almost mechanical compilation: the Duke d'Aumont had set them at liberty, and had restored to me the happy importunate want of making a worthy and noble use of them. In fine, I had resolved to sacrifice eight or ten of the best years of my life to this ungrateful journal, with the hope of amassing four or five thousand pounds, to which I limited my ambition. But the leisure which the Duke d'Aumont had procured me was worth nearly as much to me in the same number of years, without abridging any of my social pleasures in town, or in those delicious retreats where I passed the three gay seasons of the year.

I do not reckon the advantage of having been received at the French Academy sooner than I should have been had I attended only to the Mercury. It was not the intention of the Duke d'Aumont to lead me there by the hand. Yet he did so without wishing it, and even against his inclination.

I have observed more than once, and in the most critical circumstances of my life, that, when fortune has appeared most adverse, she has served me more essentially than I myself should have asked. Here you behold me ruined; and from this ruin, my dear children, you will soon see me rise in the enjoyment of the most equal, the most quiet, the most undisturbed happiness that a man of my profession can hope to possess. To establish it solidly, and on its natural basis, — I mean on the repose of the mind, — I began by freeing myself of my domestic inquietudes. Age or disease, that in particular which seemed to be contagious in my family, successively diminished the number of those dear relations to whom I had so much

pleasure in affording a comfortable subsistence. I had already persuaded my aunts to decline all trade, and, after having liquidated our debts, I had added pensions to the revenue of my little farm. Now these pensions of twelve guineas each being reduced to five, I had a residue of half my pension of one hundred and twenty guineas on the Mercury; I had beside twenty guineas interest on the four hundred guineas I had employed in giving security for M. Odde; to this I added an annuity of twenty-three pounds on the Duke of Orleans, and with what I had left on closing the accounts of the Mercury I bought some stock. So that for my lodgings, my servant, and myself I had little less than one hundred and twenty guineas to spend. I never had spent more. Madame Geoffrin wished that the payment of my rent should cease from that time; but I begged her to let me try another year whether my faculties could not answer all my wants, assuring her that if my rent oppressed me I would confess it to her without blushing. I was not driven to this necessity. Most unhappily the number of pensions I paid diminished by the death of my two sisters, who were in the convent at Clermont, and who were torn from me by the same disorder of which our father and grandmother had died. A little time afterward I lost my two old aunts, the only two who remained at home. Death left me only my mother's sister, my aunt D'Albois, who is still living. Thus I every year inherited some of the benefits I had conferred. Besides, the first editions of my Tales began to enrich me.

Tranquil with regard to fortune, my sole ambition was the French Academy; and this ambition itself was temperate and peaceful. Before I should attain



my fortieth year, I had still three years to give to my literary labors ; and in three years I should have acquired new titles to this distinction. My translation of Lucan advanced ; at the same time I was preparing materials for my " Art of Poetry," and the celebrity of the Tales perpetually increased with every new edition. I thought the prospect before me mild and delightful.

You have seen in what a courteous way the friendly Bouret has begun with me. The acquaintance once made, the intimacy formed, his societies had been mine. In one of the tales of " La Veillée " I have painted the character of his fair and most intimate friend, the beautiful Madame Gaulard. One of her two sons, an engaging man, held the place of receiver-general at Bordeaux ; he had made a journey to Paris, and the day before his departure, one of the most beautiful days in the year, we were dining together at our friend Bouret's in good and charming company. The magnificence of this hotel, which the arts had decorated, the sumptuousness of the table, the nascent verdure of the gardens, the serenity of a pure sky, and, above all, the amiability of the host, who, in the midst of his guests, seemed to be the lover of all the women, the best friend of all the men, in fine, all that could spread good-humor at a feast, had there exhilarated every soul. I, who felt myself the freest and most independent of men, was like a bird that, escaped from the net that held him captive, darts into the air with joy ; and, to be sincere, the excellent wine with which they filled my glass contributed to give wings to my soul and fancy.

In the midst of this gayety the youngest son of Madame Gaulard took farewell of us ; and, in talking of Bordeaux, he asked me if he could render me any

service there. "Yes," said I, "that of kindly receiving me when I shall visit that beautiful port and opulent city; for, in the dreams of my life, that is one of my most interesting projects." "Had I known that," said he, "you might have executed it to-morrow: I had a place to offer you in my chaise." "And I," said one of the company (it was a Jew, whose name was Gradis, one of the richest merchants in Bordeaux), "I would have undertaken to send your trunks." "My trunks," said I, "would not have been heavy; but how should I get to Paris again?" "In six weeks," replied Gaulard, "I would have brought you back." "And is all this no longer possible?" I asked. "Very possible on our part," they replied; "but we set off to-morrow." Then, whispering three words to the faithful Bury, who waited on me at dinner, I sent him to pack up my things; and instantly drinking the health of my fellow-travellers, "You see me ready," said I, "and we are off to-morrow." The whole company applauded so active a resolution, and drank the health of the travellers.

It is difficult to imagine a more agreeable journey; an excellent road, and weather so beautiful and mild that we travelled all night, sleeping with the glasses down. The directors and receivers were everywhere eager to welcome us: I fancied myself in those poetic days and beautiful climates where hospitality showed itself in fêtes.

At Bordeaux I was received and treated as well as it was possible; that is, they gave me good dinners, excellent wine, and even salutes from the ships I visited. But, though there were in this city men of cultivated minds, and formed to engage, I enjoyed less of their intercourse than I could have wished. A fatal

passion for gaming possessed them, clouded their minds, and absorbed their souls. I had every day the vexation of seeing some one oppressed with the loss he had sustained. They appeared to dine and sup together only to fall on each other with murderous hands when they rose from table; and this cruel cupidity, mixed with social enjoyments and social affections, was to me something monstrous.

Nothing could be more dangerous for a receiver-general than such society. However accurate he might be in his accounts, his sole quality of receiver should forbid him the gaming-table, as a rock, if not of his fidelity, at least of the confidence that is reposed in him; and I was not useless to my friend, in strengthening him in the resolution of never suffering himself to be affected by the contagion of example.

Another cause diminished the pleasure that my residence at Bordeaux would have given me; the maritime war made deep wounds in the commerce of that great city. The beautiful canal, that was full in my view, offered but the wrecks of it. But I easily formed an idea of what it must be in a state of peace and prosperity. The houses of some merchants, where there was no play, were those I most frequented, and that best suited me. But there was not one that had so much charm for me as that of Ansley. This merchant was an English philosopher of a venerable character. His son, though then very young, announced those qualities that ennoble man; and his two daughters, without being beautiful, had a native charm in their mind and manners that delighted me as much and more than beauty would have done. The youngest of the two, Jenny, had made a lively impression on my heart. It was for her that I composed the romance of

Pétrarque, and I sang it to her as I bade her farewell.

We only saw Avignon as we passed through Nîmes, to go and be in raptures at Vaucluse. But here again it was requisite to lower the idea we had formed of the enchanted residence of Petrarch and Laura. It is with Vaucluse as with Castalia, Peneus, and Simois. Their renown is due to the muses; their true charin is in the verses that have celebrated them. It is not that the cascade of the fountain of Vaucluse is not beautiful, both for the volume and charming bounds of its waters among the rocks that break their fall; but the poets who have described it must allow me to say that its source is absolutely destitute of the ornaments of nature: both sides of it are naked, barren, steep, without shade; it is only at the bottom of the cascade that the river which it forms begins to clothe its borders with smiling verdure. Yet, before we quitted the source of its waters we seated ourselves, meditated, and, without speaking to each other, with our eyes fixed on the ruins, that seemed to us to be the remains of Petrarch's villa, we ourselves indulged for some moments in poetic fiction, and thought we beheld, wandering round these ruins, the shades of two lovers from whom the fame of Vaucluse is derived.

But what is more essentially formed to delight the eyes is the local position and exterior of a little town that is embraced by the river of Vaucluse, and by which its walls are bathed; and this has given it the name of L'Isle. We fancied that we really beheld an enchanted island, as we walked around it, under two rows of mulberry-trees, and between two canals of spring water, pure and rapid. Some pretty groups of young Jewesses, who were walking like ourselves,

added to the illusion that the beauty of the place created; and some excellent trout, with some fine crayfish, that were brought us for supper at the inn, which terminated this charming walk, added the gratification of another sense to the pleasures of the imagination and of the view.

On our road from Aix to Lyons there was nothing remarkable but a trait of honesty in the woman who kept the inn at Tain, a village near Côté de l'Hermitage, which is so celebrated for its wines. At this village, while we were changing horses, I said to the hostess, giving her a louis-d'or, "Madame, if you have any excellent red hermitage, give me six bottles of it, and pay yourself out of this louis." She looked at me with an air of satisfaction, pleased at the confidence I was willing to repose in her.

"As for excellent red wine," said she, "I have none; but I have some white of the very best." I confided in her; and this wine, for which she took only two shillings a bottle, proved to be nothing less than nectar.

Eager to get to Geneva, we did not even give ourselves time to see Lyons; reserving for our return the pleasure of admiring the masterpieces of industry in that great workshop of luxury.

Nothing can be more singular or more original than the reception Voltaire gave us. He was in bed when we arrived. He extended his arms to us, and wept for joy while he embraced me. He embraced the son of his old friend, M. Gaulard, with the same emotion. "You find me dying," said he: "do you come to restore me to life, or to receive my last sighs?" My companion was alarmed at this preface; but I, who had a hundred times heard Voltaire say he was

dying, gave Gaulard a gentle sign of encouragement. And, indeed, a moment afterwards the dying man, making us sit down by his bedside, said, "My dear friends, how happy am I to see you! particularly at the moment when I have a man with me whom you will be charmed to hear. It is M. de l'Écluse, the surgeon-dentist of the late King of Poland, now the lord of an estate near Montargis, and who has been pleased to come to repair the irreparable teeth of Madame Denis. He is a charming man: but don't you know him?" "The only L'Écluse that I know," answered I, "is an actor of the old comic opera-house." "'Tis he, my friend, — 't is he himself. If you know him, you have heard the song of the 'Grinder,' which he plays and sings so well." And there was Voltaire instantly imitating L'Écluse, and with his bare arms and sepulchral voice playing the "Grinder," and singing the song: —

"O, where can I put her?  
My sweet little girl!  
O, where can I put her?  
They'll steal her and —"

We were bursting with laughter; and he quite serious: "I imitate him very ill," said he; "'t is L'Écluse that you must hear, and his song of the 'Spinner,' and that of the 'Postilion,' and the 'Quarrel of the Apple-Woman with Vadé!'" 'T is truth itself. O, you will be delighted. Go and speak to Madame Denis. Ill as I am, I will get up to dine with you. We'll eat some wild-fowl, and listen to M. de l'Écluse. The pleasure of seeing you has suspended my illness, and I feel myself quite revived."

Madame Denis received us with that cordiality which

made her so charming. She introduced M. de l'Écluse to us; and at dinner Voltaire engaged him, by the most flattering praises, to afford us the pleasure of hearing him. He displayed all his talents, and we appeared charmed with them. It was very requisite; for Voltaire would not have pardoned us a feeble applause.

The walk in his gardens was employed in speaking of Paris, the Mercury, the Bastile (of which I only said a word), the theatre, the Encyclopædia, and of that unhappy Le Franc, whom he still teased; his physician having ordered him, as he said, for exercise, to hunt Le Poinpignan every morning for an hour or two. He charged me to assure our friends that they should every day receive from him some new pleasantry. He was faithful to his promise.

When we returned from our walk he played a game or two at chess with M. de Gaulard, who respectfully let him win. Afterwards he again spoke of the theatre, and of the revolution which Mademoiselle Clairon had introduced. "Is then the change that has taken place in her somewhat prodigious?" said he. "It is," I replied, "a new talent; it is the perfection of art, or rather, it is nature herself, such as your imagination can paint her in her greatest beauty."

My mind and language being warm, I endeavored to make him comprehend the natural and sublime manner in which she performed Camille, Roxane, Hermione, Ariane, and Electre. I exhausted the little eloquence I had to inspire in him that enthusiasm for Clairon with which I was filled; and enjoyed, while I spoke, the emotion to which I gave birth. At last, addressing himself to me, "Well! my dear friend," said he with transport, "'t is just like Madame Denis;

she has made an astonishing, an incredible progress. I wish you could see her play *Zaïre*, *Alzire*, *Idamé*! Talent can go no further." Madame Denis playing *Zaïre*! Madame Denis compared with *Clairon*! I was thunderstruck: so true it is that taste accommodates itself to the object it can enjoy; and that this wise maxim,

"When we have not what we love,  
We must love what we have,"

is indeed not only a lesson of nature, but a means she husbands to procure us pleasures.

We returned to walk, and, while M. de Voltaire was talking to M. Gaulard of his ancient friendship for the father of this young man, I, on my side, was conversing with Madame Denis, and recalling the good old times to her memory.

In the evening I put Voltaire on the chapter of the King of Prussia. He spoke of him with a kind of cold magnanimity, like a man who disdained a too easy revenge, or as an undeceived lover pardons, in the mistress he has left, the rage and indignation she has excited.

At supper the conversation turned on the men of letters he most esteemed; and in the number it was easy for me to distinguish those he loved from the bottom of his heart. They were not those who most boasted of being in favor with him. Before he went to bed he read to us two new cantos of "*La Pucelle*," and Madame Denis informed us that, since he had been at *Les Délices*, it was the only day he had passed without retiring to his closet.

The next day we had the discretion to leave him at least a part of his morning, and sent him word that we should wait till he rang. He was visible about eleven.



He was still in bed. "Young man," said he, "I hope you have not renounced poetry; let us see some of your new productions; I conceal nothing; each should have his turn."

More intimidated before him than I had ever been, whether it were that I had lost the ingenuous confidence of early youth, or that I felt more intimately than ever how difficult it is to write good verse, I resolved, with difficulty, to recite to him my "Epistle to the Poets": he was highly pleased. He asked me if it were known at Paris. I answered that it was not. "Then," said he, "you must send it to the Academy; it will make some noise there." I represented to him that I had allowed myself a license of opinion in it at which many would be alarmed.

"I know an honorable lady," returned he, "who confessed that one day, after having proudly reproved an imprudent lover, the tender words escaped her, 'Charining, impudent wretch!' The Academy will do the same."

Before dinner he took me to make some visits at Geneva; and, talking of the way in which he lived with the inhabitants, "It is very grateful," said he, "to live in a country where its sovereigns send to ask you for your carriage that they may come and dine with you."

His house was open to them; they passed whole days there: and as the gates of the city were shut at the close of day not to open till the morning rose, those who supped at his house were obliged to sleep there or at the country houses that cover the borders of the lake.

On our way I asked him how, almost without territory, and without any facility of commerce with foreign

countries, Geneva had enriched itself. "In manufacturing watches," he replied; "in reading your gazettes, and profiting by your follies. These people know how to calculate the profits on your loans."

As we were talking of Geneva, he asked me what I thought of Rousseau. I answered, that in his writings he appeared to me only an eloquent sophist and in his character only a false cynic, who would burst with pride and indignation if the world ceased to gaze on him. As to the earnest desire he had conceived of giving a fair exterior to the part he acted, I knew the anecdote, and told it to him.

In one of the letters of Rousseau to M. de Malesherbes, you have seen in what a transport of inspiration and enthusiasm he had conceived the project of declaring himself against the arts and sciences. "I was going," says he, in the recital he has made of this miracle,—"I was going to see Diderot, then a prisoner at Vincennes; I had in my pocket a 'Mercure de France,' which I turned over as I went along. I fell on the question of the Dijon Academy, which has given rise to my first work. If anything ever resembled sudden inspiration, it is the emotion that this question excited in me. Suddenly my mind is dazzled with a thousand lights; crowds of vivid ideas press on me at once, with a degree of force and confusion that throw me into inexpressible disorder. I feel my head seized with a giddiness that resembles intoxication. A violent palpitation oppresses me, and heaves my bosom. No longer able to breathe as I walk, I fall at the foot of one of the trees of the avenue, and I there pass half an hour in such an agitation that, on rising, I perceived all the front of my waistcoat wet with my tears, without having been sensible that I had shed any."

You have here a transport eloquently described. I will now tell you the fact, in its simplicity, such as Diderot related it to me, and such as I related it to Voltaire.

"I was,"—'t is Diderot who speaks,—"I was a prisoner at Vincennes; Rousseau came to see me there. He had made me his Aristarchus, as he has said himself. One day, as we were walking together, he told me that the Dijon Academy had just proposed an interesting question, which he was desirous of treating. This question was, 'Has the re-establishment of arts and sciences contributed to the improvement of morals?' 'Which side will you take?' asked I. 'The affirmative,' answered he. 'T is the asses' bridge,' said I: 'all ordinary talents will take that road; and you will there find only commonplace ideas; whereas the contrary side presents a new, rich, and fertile field for philosophy and for eloquence.' "'You are right,' returned he, after a moment's reflection; 'and I'll take your advice.'" Thus, from that moment, added I, his part has been decided, and the mask worn.

"You do not astonish me," said Voltaire; "that man is factitious from head to foot: he is so in his mind and soul. But it is in vain for him to play now the stoic and now the cynic; he will eternally belie himself, and his mask will stifle him."

Among the inhabitants of Geneva that I saw at his house, the only men who pleased, and who were pleased with me, were the Chevalier Hubert and Cramer the bookseller. They were both of easy converse and of a jovial temper, and having wit without affectation; a rare thing in their city. Cramer, I was told, played tragedy tolerably well; he was the Orosmane of Ma-

dame Denis, and this talent had won him the friendship and the custom of Voltaire; that is to say, thousands. Hubert had a talent less useful, but amusing and very curious in its futility. You would have said he had eyes at his fingers' ends. With his hands behind his back, he would cut out a portrait in profile as like, and even more like, than he could have drawn with a pencil. He had Voltaire's face so strongly impressed on his imagination, that, absent or present, his scissors represented him meditating, writing, in action, and in all attitudes. I have seen landscapes cut out by him in white paper, where the perspective was preserved with prodigious art. These two amiable neighbors were very assiduous in their visits to *Les Délices* during the little time I stayed there.

M. de Voltaire insisted on showing us his country house at Tornay, where his theatre was, a quarter of a league from Geneva. This was the end of our ride in the afternoon in his carriage. Tornay was a little neglected country seat, but the view from it was admirable. In the valley was the Lake of Geneva, bordered by country houses, and terminated by two large cities, beyond, and in the distance, a chain of mountains of thirty leagues in extent, and that Mont Blanc! loaded with eternal snows and ice that never melts. Such is the view that Tornay affords. There I saw the little theatre that tormented Rousseau, and where Voltaire consoled himself for no longer visiting the theatre of Paris, which nightly resounded his fame.

The idea of this unjust and tyrannical privation filled me with grief and indignation. Perhaps he perceived it; for, more than once, by his reflections, he answered my thoughts; and, on the road, as we returned, he talked to me of Versailles, of the long residence I had

made there, and of the kindness that Madame de Pompadour had formerly expressed for him.

"She still loves you," said I; "she has repeated it often to me. But she is weak, and dares not, or cannot, effect all she wishes; for the unhappy woman is no longer loved, and perhaps she now envies the lot of Madame Denis, and would willingly be at Les Délices." "Let her come," said he, with transport, "and play tragedy with us. I will write characters for her, and characters of queens. She is beautiful,—she should know the play of the passions." "She knows, too," said I, "the torments of profound grief and bitter tears." "So much the better! that is just what we want," exclaimed he, as it were enchanted at having a new actress; and in truth, you would have said that he thought he saw her arrive. "Since she suits you," said I, "leave the rest to me: if she can no longer succeed on the theatre of Versailles, I will tell her that yours awaits her."

This romantic fiction amused the company. They found some probability in it; and Madame Denis, indulging the illusion, entreated her uncle not to oblige her to yield her parts to the new actress. He retired to his closet for a few hours; and in the evening, at supper, kings and their mistresses being the subject of our conversation, Voltaire, in comparing the spirit and gallantry of the old and new courts, displayed to us that rich memory which nothing interesting ever escaped. From Madame de la Vallière to Madame de Pompadour, the anecdotic history of the two reigns, and in the interval that of the regency, passed in review with a rapidity and a brilliancy of beauty and coloring that dazzled us. Yet he reproached himself with having stolen from M. de l'Écluse moments which, he

said, he would have occupied more agreeably to us. He begged him to indemnify us by a few scenes of the "Apple-Woman," and he laughed at them like a child.

The next day (it was the last we were to pass together) he sent for me early in the morning, and, giving me a manuscript, "Go into my closet," said he, "and read that; you shall give me your opinion of it." It was the tragedy of "Tancrède," that he had just finished. I read it, and returning with my face bathed in tears, I told him he had written nothing more interesting. "To whom," asked he, "would you give the part of Aménaïde?" "To Clairon," answered I; "to the sublime Clairon, and I will answer for a success at least equal to that of 'Zaïre.'" "Your tears," replied he, "tell me most eloquently what I was most desirous of knowing; but the action — did you find nothing that stopped you in its march?" "I found that it only wants what you call criticisms of the closet. The public will be too much moved to be occupied with them at the theatre." Fortunately, he said nothing of the style; I should have been obliged to conceal my sentiments; for, in my opinion, "Tancrède," in point of style, was very far from being written like his best tragedies. In "Rome Sauvée," and in "L'Orphelin de la Chine," I had still found the beautiful versification of "Zaïre," of "Merope," and of "La Mort de César"; but in "Tancrède" I thought I saw a decline in his style; weak, tedious verses, loaded with redundant words that disguise the want of force and vigor; in a word, the age of the poet: for in him, as in Corneille, the poetry of style was the first that declined; and after "Tancrède," where the fire of genius still emitted some sparks, it was wholly extinguished.

Afflicted at our departure, he would not steal from

us one moment of this last day. The desire of seeing me received at the French Academy, the eulogy of my *Tales* which formed, he said, their most agreeable family reading, then my "Analysis of Rousseau's Letter to D'Alembert on the Stage," — a refutation which he thought unanswerable, and which he appeared to esteem very highly, — were, during our walk, the subjects of his conversation. I asked him whether Geneva had been deceived on the true motive of this letter of Rousseau. "Rousseau," said he, "is better known at Geneva than at Paris. We are here neither the dupes of his false zeal nor of his false eloquence. It is against me that his darts are directed, and that is obvious to every one. Possessed of an unbounded pride, he would wish that, in his native country, no one should occupy any place in the public mind but himself. My residence here eclipses him; he envies me the air I breathe here, and above all he cannot suffer that, by amusing Geneva sometimes, I should steal moments that might be employed in thinking on him."

As we were to set off at the dawn of day, as soon as the gates of the city should be open and we could get horses, we resolved, in company with Madame Denis, M. Hubert, and M. Craner, to prolong till that hour the pleasure of sitting up and conversing together. Voltaire would be of the party, and we pressed him in vain to retire to bed; more awake than ourselves, he read to us some cantos of the poem of "Jeanne." This reading was to me an inexpressible charm; for if Voltaire, in reciting heroic verse, affected, in my mind, an emphasis too monotonous, a cadence too strongly marked, no one read familiar and comic verse with so much natural delicacy and grace: his eyes and smile had an expression that I have never seen but in him. Alas!

it was for me the song of the swan, and I was only to see him again as he expired!

Our mutual adieus were tender even to tears, but much more so on my part than on his: that was natural; for, independently of my gratitude and all the motives I had for loving him, I left him in exile.

While my epicurean philosophy was enjoying itself in the provinces, the hatred of my enemies did not sleep at Paris. I learnt, on arriving there, that D'Argental and his wife were spreading the report that I was lost in the king's esteem; and that it would be in vain for the Academy to elect me; because his Majesty would not confirm my election. I found my friends struck with this opinion; and, had I been as impatient to be of the Academy as they were to see me there, I should have been very unhappy. But, while assuring them that in spite of intrigue I should obtain this place from which my enemies were so desirous to exclude me, I also declared that my pride would be well satisfied if I deserved it, even without obtaining it. I applied myself then to finish my translation of the "Pharsalia," and my "Poétique Française"; I sent my "Épître aux Poètes" to the Academy; and as the editions of my Tales succeeded each other, I added new ones.

The success of the "Epistle to the Poets" was such as Voltaire had predicted; but it was not without difficulty that it bore the prize in reference to two other excellent rival works; one was Thomas's "Epistle to the People"; the other, Delille's "Epistle on the Advantages of Retirement for Men of Letters." This circumstance of my life was remarkable enough to deserve a few words.

I had scarcely sent my Epistle to the Academy, when Thomas, according to his custom, came to show me



that which he was about to send. I thought it beautiful, and of so noble and firm a tone that I believed it at least very possible that it would be preferred to mine. "My dear friend," said I, after having read and warmly applauded it, "I have a confidence to make, to you in my turn, but on two conditions: one, that you will observe the most absolute secrecy; the other, that, after having heard what I am going to say to you, you will make no use of it, that is, that you will act just as if I had not told it you. Give me your promise." He gave it to me. "Now," continued I, "I will tell you that I have sent an epistle to the Academy." "In this case," said he, "I withdraw mine." "That is what I cannot consent to," replied I; "and for two reasons: one, because it is very possible that my work may be objected to as heretical, and that the prize may be refused it, — you shall judge of it yourself; the other, because it is not decided that my epistle is preferable to yours, and that I will not steal from you a prize that perhaps belongs to you. I therefore rely on the promise you have given me. Here's my epistle." I read it to him; and he agreed that there were bold and perilous passages in it. Behold us then the confidential rivals of each other, and competitors with the Abbe Delille.

One day when the Academy were sitting in judgment on the rival epistles, in order to determine the prize, I met Duclos at the opera, and asked him whether it were decided. "Don't mention it," said he; "I believe this competition will set fire to the Academy. Three pieces, such as are rarely seen, dispute the prize. There are two whose merit is not doubtful; on that all are agreed; but the third turns our heads. It is the work of a young madman, full of

fervor and boldness, who respects nothing, who braves all literary prejudices, who speaks of poets like a poet, and who paints them in all their proper colors with an entire frankness; dares to praise Lucan and censure Virgil, reprobate the contempt of Boileau for Tasso, appreciate Boileau himself, and reduce him to his just value. D'Olivet is furious; he says that the Academy dishonors itself, if it adjudge the prize to this insolent work, and yet I am persuaded that it will be so." And so it was. But when I presented myself to receive the prize, D'Olivet swore that he never would forgive me as long as he lived.

It was, I think, at that time that I published my translation of the "Pharsalia": from that moment rhetoric and poetry divided my studies; and to my Tales, at intervals, a few moments were devoted.

Restored to the good graces of Madame de Pompadour, I communicated my fears to her, entreating her to learn from the king whether he would be favorable to me. She had the kindness to ask him, and his answer was, that if I were elected, he would confirm my election. "May I then, madame," said I, "assure the Academy of it?" "No," replied she; "no, you would compromise me; you must only say that you have reason to hope for the king's approval." "But, madame," insisted I, "if the king has formally said to you—" "I know what the king has said to me," replied she with vivacity; "but do I know what those about him may make him say?" These words silenced me; and I returned to D'Alembert with the vexatious account of what had just passed.

After having inveighed bitterly against feeble minds, it was decided between us that I should only announce hope, but in such a tone as plainly to indicate that it

was well founded: and, indeed, the death of Marivaux, in 1763, leaving a vacant place, I made the usual visits, with the air of a man who had nothing to fear from the court. At the same time, the inquietude of Madame de Pompadour on the influence courtiers might have in directing the king's decision disturbed me; I labored to imagine some means of assuring myself of his favor: I thought I discovered one; but at that moment I could not employ it. My "Poétique" was in the press, but some months would still elapse before it could be published; and it was the instrument of the design I had formed. Fortunately, the Abbé de Radouville, formerly under teacher to the French princes, presented himself, at the same time with me, as a candidate for this vacant place; and it was doing something agreeable to the dauphin, and perhaps to the king himself, to resign it to him. I went then to Versailles, to declare to my competitor that I withdrew from the contest. I had but little merit in it, he would have carried it against me; and such was his modesty, that he was sensible of this deference, as if he had owed to me alone all the suffrages united in his favor. A very remarkable circumstance, at this election, was the artifice employed by my enemies, and by those of D'Alembert and Duclos, to render us odious to the court of the dauphin. They had begun by spreading the report that my party would be adverse to the Abbé de Radouville, and that if, on the first scrutiny, he obtained the majority, at least on the second he would not escape the affront of some black balls. This prediction being made, the question was how to verify it; and they attempted it thus. There were at the Academy four men distinguished by the name of philosophers, an odious title at that time.

These noted academicians were Duclos, D'Alembert, Saurin, and Watelet. The worthy chiefs of the opposite party, D'Olivet, Batteux, and probably Paulmi and Séguier, formed a plot to give four black balls, which would most assuredly be attributed to the philosophers; and indeed four black balls were found on the scrutiny.

Great astonishment and murmurs were heard among those who had given them; and with their eyes fixed on the four on whom the suspicion rested, the impostors said loudly that it was very strange that a man so faultless and so estimable as the Abbé de Radouvilliers should experience the affront of four black balls! The Abbé d'Olivet was indignant at so shameful, so public a scandal; the four philosophers looked confounded. But the chances quickly turned in their favor, and to the shame of their enemies. The unexpected stroke was this: the custom of the Academy on beginning the ballot was to distribute to each of the electors two balls, one black and one white. The box into which they fell had likewise two capsules, and two cups above, one white and the other black. When you would vote in favor of the candidate, you put the white ball into the white cup, the black ball into the black cup; and when you would vote against him, you put the white ball into the black cup, and the black ball into the white cup. Thus, on examining the balls, the whole number should be found, and as many white in the black capsule as there were black in the white capsule.

Now, by a species of divination, one of the philosophers, Duclos, having foreseen the trick that their enemies were about to play them, had said to his comrades, "Let's keep our black balls in our hands, so that if those knaves have the malice to give any, we may

be able to produce the proof that the black balls do not come from us."

As soon, then, as they had suffered D'Olivet and the other impostors to burst out into murmurs against the malevolent, "It is not I," said Duclos, opening his hand, "who have given a black ball; for I have fortunately kept mine, and there it is!" "Nor is it I," said D'Alembert; "here's mine!" Watelet and Saurin said the same in showing theirs. At this sudden blow the confusion was reflected back on the authors of the artifice. D'Olivet had the simplicity to think it unfair to have parried the blow by keeping back the black balls, alleging the laws of the Academy, on the inviolable secrecy of the ballot. "M. l'Abbé," said D'Alembert to him, "the first of laws is that of personal defence; and we had only this method of arming ourselves against the suspicious light in which you have endeavored to place us."

This trait of foresight on the part of Duclos became current in society, and the D'Olivets, caught in their own trap, were the ridicule of the court.

At length, the printing of my "Poétique" being completed, I entreated Madame de Pompadour to obtain from the king that a work which was wanting in our literature might be presented to him. "It is," added I, "a favor which will cost nothing either to the king or the state, and which will prove that I am well liked and well received by the king." I owe this testimony to the memory of this beneficent woman, that, at this simple and easy method of publicly deciding the king in my favor, her beautiful countenance beamed with joy. "Most willingly," said she, "will I ask for you this favor of the king, and it will be granted." She obtained it without difficulty, and, in

announcing it to me, "You must give," said she, "all possible solemnity to this presentation; and on the same day all the royal family and all the ministers must receive your work from your own hand."

I confided my secret only to my most intimate friends; and my copies being very magnificently bound (for I spared no expense in it), I went one Saturday evening to Versailles with my packets. On my arrival I entreated Madame de Pompadour, through Quesnai, to engage the king to receive me kindly.

The next day I was introduced by the Duke de Duras. The king was at his levee. I never saw him so engaging. He received my homage with an enchanting look. I should have been at the summit of joy if he had said one word to me; but his eyes spoke for him. The dauphin, whom the Abbé de Radouvilliers had predisposed in my favor, had the kindness to speak to me. "I have heard much in praise of this work," said he; "I think highly of its author." As he pronounced these words he smote my heart with grief, for I saw death on his countenance and in his eyes.

After this business was over I went quickly to D'Alembert and Duclos, to announce to them the success I had just had; and the next day I made a present of my book to the Academy. I distributed some copies of it to those academicians whose sentiments I knew to be favorable to me. Mairau said that in this work I had laid a mine under the door of the Academy, in order to blow it up if it were shut upon me; but all the difficulties were not yet removed.

Duclos and D'Alembert had had some strange altercation in full Academy, on the subject of the King of Prussia, and of Cardinal de Bernis; they had so vio-

lently fallen out that they no longer spoke to each other; and, at the moment when I was likely to need their harmony and good intelligence, I found them enemies to each other. Duclos, the more hasty of the two, but the less lively, was likewise the less offended. The enmity of such a man as D'Alembert gave him pain; he wanted to be reconciled; but he wished that I should engage D'Alembert to make the first advances.

"I am indignant," said he, "at the oppression under which you have groaned, and at the secret and sordid persecution you still experience. It is time that it should finish. Bougainville is dying; you must have his place. Tell D'Alembert that I desire nothing more than to secure it to you; let him speak to me about it at the Academy: we will arrange this business for the next election."

D'Alembert stamped with rage when I proposed to him to speak to Duclos. "Let him go to the devil," answered he, "with his Abbé de Bernis: I will have no more to do with the one than the other." "In that case, I give up the Academy; my only regret," said I, "is that I ever thought of it." "Why so?" replied he with warmth; "do you want Duclos, in order to be of it?" "And whom should I not want, when my friends abandon me, and when my enemies are more eager to injure me, and more active than ever? Ah! they would speak to the devil, to deprive me of a single vote; but what I have formerly said in verse I experience myself:—

'Friendship desponds, but, frozen by misfortune,  
Hatred, implacable, never tires.'

"You shall be of the Academy in spite of your enemies," replied he. "No, sir, no, I shall not be of it;

I will not be of it. I shall be played the fool with, supplanted, insulted by a party already too numerous and too strong. I prefer living in obscurity; for that, thank Heaven, I shall want no one." "But, Marmontel, you are angry, and I don't know why—" "O, I well know why; the friend of my heart, the man on whom I reckoned most on earth, has but one word to say to extricate me from oppression—" "Well! Good God! and I'll say it; but nothing ever gave me so much pain in my life." "Has Duclos then so seriously offended you?" "What! don't you know, then, with what insolence, in full Academy, he has spoken of the King of Prussia?" "Of the King of Prussia! and what does this king regard the insolence of Duclos? Ah! D'Alembert, tell me that you have need of my most cruel enemy, and that to serve you it is only requisite to pardon him; I'll go and embrace him instantly." "Well," answered he, "this evening I'll be reconciled to Duclos; but let him serve you well; for it is only at that price, and for love of you—" "I am sure he'll serve you well," said I; and indeed Duclos, enchanted to see D'Alembert return to him, was as active and as warm in my favor as he himself.

But, at the death of Bougainville, and at the moment when I flattered myself that I should succeed him without any obstacle, D'Alembert sent for me. "Do you know," said he, "what they are plotting against you? They oppose to you a competitor, in favor of whom Praslin, D'Argental, and his wife are soliciting votes both in town and at the court. They boast of having engaged a great number of them, and I believe it; for this competitor is Thomas." "I do not believe," I replied, "that Thomas consents to be



the instrument of this manœuvre." "But," said he, "Thomas is very much embarrassed about it. You know that they have entangled him by favors and gratitude; besides, they have long persecuted him to think of the Academy; and, on his representing to them that his quality of private secretary to the minister would be an obstacle to his election, Praslin had obtained for him from the king a patent that ennobled his place. Now that the obstacle is removed, they require that he should offer himself, and make themselves responsible for a great majority of votes. He is at Fontainebleau with the minister, and beset by D'Argental. I advise you to go there and see him."

I set off, and on arriving I wrote to Thomas, to request a rendezvous. He answered that, at five o'clock, he would be on the border of the great basin. I waited for him there; and, in coming up to him, "You surely conjecture, my dear friend," said I, "what brings me here. I come to know from you whether what I am told be true"; and I repeated to him what D'Alembert had said to me.

"Yes, it is true," answered Thomas; "and it is also true that M. d'Argental has signified to me this morning that M. de Praslin insists on my offering myself; that he requires of me this mark of attachment; that such has been the condition of the patent he has procured me; that in accepting it I must have understood why it was granted to me; and that if I disoblige my benefactor out of regard for a man who has offended him, I lose my place and my fortune. This is my position. Now tell me what you would do in my place." "Are you really serious," said I, "when you ask that question?" "Yes," he replied, smiling, and with the air of a man whose resolution was fixed. "Well,

then," answered I, "in your place I would do what you will do." "Nay, irony apart, what would you do?" "I don't pretend," said I, "to give myself for an example; but am I not your friend? Are you not mine?" "Yes," returned he; "and I say it openly, —

"I have told it to earth, to heaven, to Gusman himself."

"Well," replied I, "if I had a son, and if he had the misfortune to serve the hatred of a Gusman against his friend, I would —" "Stop there," said Thomas to me, shaking me by the hand; "my answer is made and well made." "Ah, my friend," said I, "do you think I doubted it?" "Yet you are come to assure yourself of it," added he, with a gentle reproof. "Certainly not," answered I; "it is not for myself that I needed this assurance, but for those who do not know your heart so well as I know it." "Tell them," replied he, "that if ever I enter the Academy, it shall be by the door of honor. And with respect to fortune, I have enjoyed it so short a time, and have done without it so long, that I hope I have not now to learn to live without it." At these words, I was so moved that I would have resigned the place to him, if he would have accepted it, and if he could have done it with decency. But the hatred of the minister against me was so declared, that we should have been supposed, he to have served it and I to have sunk under it. We therefore adopted that free and frank conduct that became us both. He did not offer himself as a candidate; and he lost his place as secretary to the minister. However, they had not the impudence to deprive him of that of secretary interpreter to the Swiss republic. He was received by the Academy immediately after me, he was received by acclamations, but after a long

interval; for from 1763 to 1766 there was no vacancy, although the average number of deaths in the Academy was three in two years.

I ought to tell, to the shame of the Count de Praslin and to the glory of Thomas, that the latter, after having refused to commit an act of slavery and meanness, thought it his duty not to withdraw from the house of a man who had done him some service, till he should be dismissed. He remained with him another month, presenting himself as usual every morning at his levee, while this vain, unfeeling man never said a single word to him, or even deigned to look. To a soul naturally proud and noble, like that of Thomas, judge how painful this humble trial must have been! At length, after having given to gratitude even more than its due, seeing how irreconcilable was the vile arrogance of this minister, which modest patient attention could not overcome, he sent him word that he felt himself obliged to take his silence for a dismissal, and left him. This conduct completely made known his character; and even on the score of fortune he lost nothing by having acted like an honest man. The king was pleased with him for it; and he not only obtained afterwards a pension of eighty guineas on the royal treasury, but a handsome apartment at the Louvre, which was procured for him by the Count d'Angiviller, his friend and mine.

You have just seen, my dear children, through how many difficulties I arrived at the Academy. But I have not told you with what thorns the vanity of talents had strewn my way.

During the contrarieties I experienced Madame Geoffrin was uneasy; she would sometimes pretend to rally me about them; but at every new election that re-

tarded mine I saw she was vexed. "Well," would she say to me, "is it then decided that you are not to be of the Academy?" I, who did not wish her to be disturbed about it, answered, negligently, that it was the least of my cares; that the author of the "*Henriade*," of "*Zaïre*," of "*Merope*," had not been received there till after he was fifty, and that I was not forty; that I should perhaps belong to it one day; that many honest men, and of distinguished merit, consoled themselves for not being of it, and that I should console myself like them. I begged her to be as little concerned about it as myself. She was not the less uneasy; and, from time to time, in her way, and by little subtle words, she sounded the dispositions of the academicians.

One day she asked me, "What has M. de Marivaux done to you to induce you to mock at him and turn him into ridicule?" "Me, madame!" "Yes, you, who laugh in his face, and make others laugh at his expense —" "Really, madame, I do not know what you mean to say." "I mean to say what he has told me: Marivaux is an honest man, he cannot have imposed upon me." "Then he must explain to me himself what I do not understand. For in my life he has never been, either present or absent, the subject of my ridicule." "Well! call on him, and endeavor," said she, "to convince him of the contrary; for, even in his complaints, he is lavish of your praise." Crossing the garden of the Palais Royal, where he lodged, I saw and accosted him.

He had at first some repugnance to explain himself; and he repeated to me that he would not be the less just to me whenever I should present myself for the Academy. "Sir," said I at last with some impatience,

"let us leave the Academy out of the question, it makes no part of my motive for addressing you; it is not your vote that I solicit; it is your esteem that I reclaim, and of which I am jealous." "You have it entirely," answered he. "If I have it, be pleased to tell me then in what I have given rise to the complaints you make of me." "What!" said he, "have you forgotten at Madame Dubocage's one evening, as you were sitting by Madame de Villaumont, you never ceased, either of you, to look at me and laugh, whispering to each other? It certainly was at me you laughed, and I don't know why, for on that day I was not more ridiculous than usual."

"Fortunately," said I, "what you would remind me of is fresh in my memory: the fact is this, Madame de Villaumont saw you for the first time; and as the company were crowding round you, she asked me who you were. I told her your name. She, who knew an officer of the same name, insisted that you were not M. de Marivaux. Her obstinacy diverted me; mine appeared ridiculous to her; and in describing to me the face of the Marivaux she knew, she looked at you: this is the whole mystery." "Yes," replied he ironically; "the mistake was very laughable! yet you had both a certain arch and bantering air that I well understand, and which is not that of simple pleasantry." "Yet ours was very simple and very innocent, I assure you. Besides, too," added I, "it is the naked truth. I thought I owed it to you, and I have now paid it; if you do not believe me, I shall then, sir, have a right to complain of you." He assured me that he believed me; though he did not fail to tell Madame Geoffrin that he had only taken this explanation for an adroit way of excusing myself to him. Death deprived me

of his vote; but had he given it me he would have thought himself generous.

Madame de Villauumont, whom I have mentioned to you, was the daughter of Madame Gaulard, and the rival of Madame de Brienne in beauty, which was more lively and inviting.

Madame Dubocage, at whose house we sometimes supped, was a woman of letters, of an estimable character, but without relief and without coloring. She, like Madame Geoffrin, had a literary society, but infinitely less agreeable, and analogous to her mild, cold, formal, and melancholy disposition. I had belonged to it for some time, but its gravity oppressed me, and I was driven from it by tediousness. In this woman, who was for a moment celebrated, the thing truly admirable was her modesty. She saw engraved at the bottom of her portrait, "*Fornâ Venus, arte Minerva*"; and she was never caught in one impulse of vanity. Let us return to the complaints that were made against me by men of another character.

Among the academicians whose votes were not assured to me we reckoned the president, Hénault, and Moncrif. Madame Geoffrin spoke to them and returned to me in a rage. "It seems clear," said she, "that you pass your life in making yourself enemies! There's Moncrif furious against you; and the president, Hénault, is scarcely less irritated." "At what, madame? what have I done to them?" "What have you done! why, you have written your '*Poétique*'; for you have always the rage for writing." "And what is it in this book that irritates them?" "As for Moncrif, I know what it is," said she; "he makes no secret of it, but speaks publicly. You quote a song of his and you mutilate it. It was in five couplets; you

cite but three of them." "Alas! madame, I have cited the best, and I have only left out those which repeated the same idea." "Indeed! that is exactly what he complains of, you thought proper to correct his work. Living or dying, he will never pardon you." "Then let him live and die my enemy, madame, for the two couplets of his song: I will support my misfortune. And the good president, — what is my offence to him?" "He has not told me: but I believe it is of your book, too, that he complains. I shall know it." He told it her. But, when I pressed her to repeat it to me, it was a comic scene at which the Abbé Raynal was present.

"Well, madame, you have seen the president, Hénault; has he told you at last what has been my offence?" "Yes, I know it; but he forgives you; he is willing to forget it; let's say no more about it." "At least, madame, I ought to know what this involuntary crime is, that he has the goodness to forget." "Why know it? That's very useless. You will have his vote, that's enough." "No, it is not enough; and I do not like to endure complaint without knowing why." "Madame," said the Abbé Raynal, "I think M. Marmontel is right." "Don't you see," replied she, "that he wants to know it, only that he may turn it into ridicule or make a tale of it." "No, madame, I promise you never to mention it from the moment I shall know what it is." "What it is! why, always your book and your rage for quotations. I think I have your book there?" "Yes, madame, there it is." "Let's see that song of the president's that you have quoted among your drinking songs. Here it is: —

"Cousole me for a mistress that's false," etc.

From whom had you this song?" "From Géliote."  
"Well, then, Géliote has not given it you such as it really is, if I must tell you. You have left out an *Oh!*"  
"An *Oh!* madame!" "Why, yes, an *Oh*. Is there not a verse that begins, 'What charms'?" "Yes, madame: —

'What charms! ye heavens! what beauty.'"

"That's it: there's the fault. You should have said, 'Oh ye heavens! what beauty!'" "Why, Madame, the sense is the same." "Yes, sir, but when you cite, you should cite correctly. Every man is jealous of what he has written; that is natural. The president did not ask you to quote his song." "I have quoted it with praise." "Then you should not have changed it. Since he had put, 'Oh ye heavens!' that pleased him best. What had he done to you that you must deprive him of his *Oh*? However, he has faithfully assured me that it will not prevent him from doing justice to your talents."

The Abbé Raynal had a most longing desire to burst into laughter, and I too, but we contained ourselves; for Madame Geoffrin was already sufficiently confused, and when she was in the wrong it was no joking matter.

As we went away I related to the abbé my adventure with Marivaux and my dispute with Moncrif. "Ah!" said he, "that proves to us that, when a man is said to have enemies, we should well inquire whether he has deserved them before we condemn him."

When I had passed this strait, my life resumed its free and tranquil course. It was divided between the town and the country, and both made me happy. Of my societies in town, the only one I no longer fre-



quented was that of *les Menus Plaisirs*. Cury, who had been the soul of it, was infirm and ruined. He died a short time afterwards.

When his secret became known (and it was not so till after his death) I have sometimes heard it said in society that he ought to have declared himself the author of the parody. I always maintained that he ought not; and woe to me if he had done it, for it would have been he whom they would have oppressed, and I should have died with grief. My fault was my own, and it would have been in the highest degree unjust if another had suffered for it. Besides, the parody, such as the world had seen it, full of gross insults, was not that which he had written. In accusing himself of the one, he ought then to have been permitted to disavow the other; and had he made this distinction, would it have been listened to? His ruin would have been inevitable, and I should have been the cause of it. By remaining silent, he did what was most just, and best to do for me and for himself, and I owed to him the sweets of the life I led after my most happy misfortune had restored me to myself and to my friends.

I do not number among my intimate associates the assembly that was held every evening at Mademoiselle l'Espinasse's; for, with the exception of some of D'Alembert's friends, as the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Abbé Morellet, St. Lambert, and myself, this circle was formed of men who were not at all acquainted with each other. She had taken them here and there in society, but so well matched that when they were there they found themselves in most perfect harmony, like the strings of an instrument tuned by a single hand. To follow the comparison, I might say that she played on this instrument with an art that had

the features of genius. She seemed to know what sound the string that she was about to touch would produce. I mean to say, she was so well acquainted with our minds and dispositions, that she had but to speak a word to bring them into play. Nowhere was conversation more lively, more brilliant, nor better regulated than at her house. That degree of temperate, and ever equal warmth, in which she knew how to support it, now by gently inclining it to moderation, and now by animating it, was a rare phenomenon. The continual activity of her soul communicated itself to our minds, but without excess: her imagination was its spring, her reason its regulator. And take notice, that the understandings she thus moved at her will were neither weak nor light: the Condillacs and the Turgots were of the number; D'Alembert by her side was like a simple and a docile child. Her talent for throwing out an idea, and giving it for debate to men of this class; her talent for discussing it herself, and like them with precision, sometimes with eloquence; her aptitude to introduce new ideas and vary conversation with the ease and facility of a fairy, who, with a stroke of her wand, changes at her will the scene of her enchantments, — these merits, I say, were not those of an ordinary woman. It was not with the follies of fashion and vanity that she every day, during four hours of conversation, without languor and without interval, knew how to render herself interesting to a circle of enlightened men. It is true that one of her charms was that ardent disposition which gave passion to her language and communicated to her opinions the warmth, the interest, the eloquence of sentiment. Often, too, at her house, and very often, reason became gay: a mild philosophy there allowed

itself a gentle pleasantry ; D'Alembert gave the tone of it ; and who ever knew better than he

“ To mix

The severe with the comic, the grave with the gay ” ?

The history of a woman so singularly endowed by nature as Mademoiselle l'Espinasse should be to you, my dear children, curious and interesting. The recital of it will not be long.

There was at Paris a Marchioness du Déffand, full of wit, caprice, and ill-humor ; gallant, and tolerably beautiful in her youth, but old at the time of which I am speaking, almost blind, and tormented by spleen and melancholy. Retired to a convent on a narrow fortune, she did not cease to keep the brilliant society in which she had lived. She had become acquainted with D'Alembert at her old lover's, the president Hénault's, over whom she still tyrannized, and who, naturally very timid, had continued to be the slave of fear long after he had ceased to be that of love. Madame du Déffand, charmed with the wit and gayety of D'Alembert, had invited him to her house, and so captivated him that he was inseparable from her. He lived at a distance from her, and never passed a day without going to see her.

At the same time, to fill the vacant moments of her solitude, Madame du Déffand was looking for a young, well-educated girl, without fortune, who would be her companion, and who, in the quality of friend, that is, of a devoted slave, would live with her in her convent. She happened to meet with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, and she was enchanted with her, as you may suppose. D'Alembert was not less charmed to find so interesting a third at the house of his old friend.

Between this young lady and him misfortune had made an affinity that might well induce their souls to harmonize. They were both what are called children of love. I saw this nascent friendship when Madame du Déffand used to bring them with her to sup at my friend Madame Harenc's; and it was then that our acquaintance began. There wanted nothing less than such a friend as D'Alembert to soften and render supportable to Mademoiselle l'Espinasse the melancholy and severity of her situation; for it was not enough to be the slave of perpetual attentions to a blind and splenetic woman, it was requisite to live with her, to turn day into night and night into day, as she did, and to sit by her bedside and read her to sleep; an exertion that was mortal to this young girl, naturally delicate, and from which her exhausted lungs were never afterwards able to recover. Yet she withstood it till an incident happened that broke her chain.

Madame du Déffand, after having sat up all night at home or at Madame de Luxembourg's, who kept as late hours as herself, used to sleep all day, and was not visible till about six in the evening. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, retired in her little chamber that looked into the court of the convent, did not rise more than an hour before her marchioness; but that hour so precious, stolen from her slavery, was employed in receiving in her own apartment her personal friends, D'Alembert, Chastellux, Turgot, and myself occasionally. Now these gentlemen were likewise the habitual company of Madame du Déffand; and the moments they thus passed with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse were stolen from her; this private rendezvous was therefore a secret from her; for they easily foresaw that she would be jealous of it. She discovered it, and insisted that it

was nothing less than treason. She told it everywhere, accusing this poor girl of withdrawing her friends from her, and declaring that she would no longer nourish such a serpent in her bosom.

This separation was abrupt; but Mademoiselle l'Espinasse was not abandoned. All the friends of Madame du Déffand were become hers. It was easy for her to persuade them that the anger of this woman was unjust. The president Hénault himself declared for her. The Duchess of Luxembourg thought her old friend in the wrong, and made Mademoiselle l'Espinasse a present of some furniture for the lodgings she took. Finally, through the Duke de Choiseul, her friends obtained for her from the king an annual gratification that put her above want, and the most distinguished circles in Paris disputed the pleasure of her company.

D'Alembert, to whom Madame du Déffand imperiously proposed the alternative of renouncing the friendship of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse or her own, did not hesitate, and gave himself wholly to his young friend. They lived at a distance from each other; and though in bad weather it was painful for D'Alembert to return in an evening from Belle Chasse Street to Michael le Comte Street, where his nurse lived, he did not think of quitting this latter. But at her house he fell sick, and so dangerously as to alarm Bouvart, his physician. His disorder was one of those putrid fevers, the first remedy of which is a free and pure air. Now his lodging at his glazier's was a little chamber, badly lighted, badly aired, with a bed like a coffin. Bouvart declared to us that the incommodiousness of this lodging might be fatal. Watelet offered him one in his hotel, near the Boulevard du Temple; he was carried there;

and Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, whatever might be thought and said of it, determined to be his nurse. No one thought or said anything of it but in praise.

D'Alembert was restored to life, and from that moment consecrating his days to her who had preserved them, he desired to live near her. Nothing could be more innocent than their intimacy: it was therefore respected; malice itself never attacked it; and the consideration that Mademoiselle l'Espinasse enjoyed, far from suffering any blemish from it, was the more honorably and firmly established. But this union, so pure, and on the part of D'Alembert always tender and unalterable, was neither so grateful to him nor so happy as it ought to have been.

The ardent soul and romantic imagination of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse made her conceive the project of rising from the narrow mediocrity in which she was fearful of finishing her days. With all the means she possessed of pleasing, without being even beautiful, it appeared to her very possible that, in the number of her friends, and even among the most distinguished, some one might be so in love with her as to offer her his hand. This ambitious hope, more than once deceived, did not despond; it changed its object, always more exalted, and so lively that it might have been taken for the intoxication of love. For instance, she was at one time so passionately struck with what she called the heroism and the genius of Guibert, that in the art of war and for the talent of writing she saw nothing comparable to him. Yet he escaped her like the rest. Then it was the conquest of the Marquis de Mora, a young Spaniard of high birth, to whom she thought she might aspire; and indeed, whether it were love or enthusiasm, this young man had con-

ceived a passionate sentiment for her. We saw him more than once in adoration before her, and the impression she had made on his heart assumed so serious a character that the family of the marquis hastened to recall him. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, crossed in her desires, was no longer the same with D'Alembert; and he not only endured her coldness and caprice, but often the bitterness of her wounded temper. He brooked his sorrows, and complained only to me. Unhappy man! such were his devotion and obedience to her, that, in the absence of M. de Mora, it was he who used to go early in a morning to ask for his letters at the post-office and bring them to her when she woke. At last, the young Spaniard falling sick in his own country, and his family waiting only his recovery to marry him suitably, Mademoiselle l'Espinasse contrived to have it pronounced by a physician at Paris that the climate of Spain would be mortal to him; that if his friends wished to save his life they should send him to breathe the air of France; and this consultation, dictated by Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, was obtained by D'Alembert from his intimate friend Lorry, one of the most celebrated physicians in Paris. The authority of Lorry, supported by the patient, had in Spain all its effect. The young man was suffered to set off on his return, but he died on the road; and the deep sorrow that Mademoiselle l'Espinasse felt at it completed the destruction of that frail machine which her ambition had ruined, and brought her to the grave.

D'Alembert was inconsolable for his loss. It was then that he came, as it were, to bury himself in the lodging that he had at the Louvre. I have said elsewhere how he there passed the rest of his life. He often complained to me of the fatal solitude into which

he fancied himself fallen. In vain did I remind him of what he had so often said to me on the change in his fair friend. "Yes," answered he, "she was changed, but I was not; she no longer lived for me, but I ever lived for her. Since she is no more, I know not why I live. Ah! why have I not still to suffer those moments of bitterness that she so well knew how to sweeten and make me forget! Do you remember the happy evenings we passed together? Now, what have I left? I return home, and instead of herself I find but her shade. This lodging at the Louvre is itself a tomb, which I never enter but with horror."

I here relate in substance the conversations we had together as we walked alone in an evening in the Tuileries; and I ask whether this be the language of a man to whom nature had refused sensibility of heart?

Much happier than he, I lived in a circle of the most charming women without being tied to any one by the bonds of slavery. Neither the pretty and inviting Filleul, nor the witty and beautiful Séran, nor the dazzling Villaumont, nor any one of those who most delighted me, troubled my repose. As I well knew they did not think of me, I had neither the simplicity nor the fatuity to think of them. I could have said with Atys, and with more sincerity, —

"I love the opening rose;  
Its odors let me taste:  
And had it not its thorn,  
I'd press it to my breast."

What charmed me in them were the graces of the mind, the mobility of their imagination, the easy and natural turn of their ideas and language, and a certain delicacy of fancy and feeling, that, like their faces, seems reserved for their sex. Their conversations



were a school not less useful to me than agreeable ; and, as much as possible, I profited by their lessons. He that will write with precision, energy, and vigor only, may live only with men ; but he who wishes for suppleness in his style, for amenity, and for that something which charms and enchants, will, I believe, do very tight to live with women. When I read that Pericles sacrificed every morning to the Graces, what I understand by it is, that every day Pericles breakfasted with Aspasia.

Yet, however interesting on the score of intellect the society of these engaging women might be, it did not prevent me from going to fortify my mind, to elevate, extend, enlarge, and fertilize my ideas, in a society of men whose intellects infused warmth and light into mine. The house of Baron d'Holbach, and afterwards that of Helvetius, was the rendezvous of this society, partly composed of the flower of Madame Geoffrin's convivial friends, and partly of some others, who were thought by Madame Geoffrin too bold and adventurous to be admitted to her dinners. She esteemed Baron d'Holbach, she loved Diderot, but silently, and without exposing herself for them. It is true that she had admitted, and, as it were, adopted Helvetius, but it was while he was still young, and before he had committed any follies.

I never knew why D'Alembert kept himself aloof from the society of which I am speaking. He and Diderot, associates in the labors and glory of the undertaking of the Encyclopædia, were at first cordially united ; but they were now no longer so ; they spoke of each other with much esteem, but they did not associate together, and scarcely ever met. I never dared to ask them the reason.

Jean Jacques Rousseau and Buffon were for some time of this philosophic society. But the former left us, an open enemy ; and the latter, with more management and address, withdrew and kept himself apart. As for these, I think I well know what was the system of their conduct.

Buffon, with the king's cabinet and his natural history, felt himself strong enough to live with some magnificence. He saw that the *encyclopedique* school was out of favor at court and with the king ; he was afraid of being involved in the common wreck ; and, to continue his prosperous voyage with swelling sails, or at least to steer prudently among the rocks, he preferred having a free and separate bark to himself. At this no one was offended ; but his retreat had yet another cause.

Buffon, surrounded at home by flatterers and devoted admirers, and accustomed to an obsequious deference for his systematic ideas, was sometimes disagreeably surprised to find among us less reverence and docility. I used to see him go away dissatisfied at the opposition he had endured. With incontestable merit, he had an arrogance and presumption by which it was at least equalled. Spoiled by adulation, and placed by the multitude in the class of our great men, he had the vexation of seeing that the mathematicians, the chemists, and the astronomers allotted him but a very inferior rank among them ; that the naturalists themselves were but little disposed to put him at their head, and that among men of letters he obtained only the slender praise of an elegant writer and a great colorist. Some even reproached him with having written pompously on a subject that required a simple and natural style. I recollect that one of his friends having

asked me how I should speak of him if I were chosen to make his funeral oration at the French Academy, I answered that I should give him a distinguished place among poets of the descriptive kind ; a way of praising him with which he was by no means satisfied.

Buffon, uncomfortable with his peers, shut himself up at home with a few ignorant and servile flatterers, going to neither of the Academies, courting apart the favor of the ministers, and laboring to extend his reputation in foreign courts, from which he received handsome presents in exchange for his work ; his peaceful vanity at least injured no one. It was not the same with that of Rousseau.

After the success which his two works, crowned at Dijon, had produced on the jejune Rousseau, foreseeing that, by coloring paradoxes with his style and by animating them with his eloquence, it would be easy for him to obtain a crowd of enthusiasts, he conceived the ambition of forming a sect ; and, instead of being a simple associate in the philosophic school, he wanted to be the chief and sole professor in a school of his own ; but withdrawing from our society, like Buffon, without dispute and without noise, he would not have completed his object. To attract the crowd, he had attempted to give himself the air of an old philosopher ; he showed himself at the opera, in the coffee-houses, in the walks, first in an old great-coat, and then in the habit of an Armenian ; but neither his little dirty wig and the stick of Diogenes, nor his fur cap, arrested the passengers. He wanted some grand disturbance, to advertise the enemies of men of letters, and particularly of those who were marked with the name of philosophers, that J. J. Rousseau was divorced from them. This rupture would draw to him a crowd of partisans ;

and he had well calculated that the priests would be of the number. It was therefore not enough for him to separate from Diderot and his friends, he abused them ; and by a dart of calumny directed against Diderot he gave the signal of the war he had declared against them on parting.

At the same time their society, consoled for this loss, and little affected by the ingratitude which Rousseau professed, found in its own bosom the most grateful pleasures that the liberty of thought and the commerce of minds can procure. We were no longer led and held by leading-strings, as at Madame Geoffrin's. But this liberty was not license, and there are revered and inviolable subjects that were never submitted to the debate of opinion. God, virtue, the holy laws of natural morality, were there never held in doubt, at least in my presence ; this I can attest. The career was still vast enough ; and mind took such bold flights there that I sometimes thought I heard the disciples of Pythagoras or of Plato. It was there that Galiani was so astonishing for the originality of his ideas, and for the adroit, singular, unforeseen turn by which he effected their development ; it was there that the chemist Roux revealed to us, like a man of genius, the mysteries of nature ; it was there that Baron d'Holbach, who had read everything and forgotten nothing interesting, poured out abundantly the riches of his memory ; it was there, above all, with his mild and persuasive eloquence, and his face sparkling with the fire of inspiration, that Diderot spread light in every mind and warmth in every heart. He that has known Diderot only by his writings has not known him. His hypotheses on the art of writing disfigured his charming simplicity. When he was animated by conversa-

tion, and suffered the abundance of his ideas to flow from their source, he forgot his theories, and suffered himself to be carried on by the impulse of the moment; it was then that he was enchanting. In his writings, he never knew how to form a whole: that first operation, that regulates and puts everything in its place, was for him too slow and too painful. He wrote with fire before he had meditated anything; so that he has written beautiful pages, as he used to say himself, but he has never written a book. This defect of plan disappeared in the free and varied course of conversation.

One of Diderot's fine moments was when an author consulted him on his work. If the subject were worth the pains, you should have seen him seize it, penetrate it, and at one view discover of what riches and what beauties it was susceptible. If he perceived that the author had succeeded ill, instead of listening to the reading, his fancy supplied the defects of the work. If it were a play, he would imagine new scenes, new incidents, new traits of character; and, thinking he had heard what he had meditated, he extolled to us the piece that had just been read to him, and in which, when it appeared, we found scarcely anything of what he had cited. In general, and in all the branches of human knowledge, all was so familiar to him, and so present to his mind that he always appeared, prepared for whatever might be said to him; and his most sudden perceptions were like the results of recent study or of long meditation.

This man, one of the most enlightened of the age, was likewise one of the most engaging: and particularly on what concerned moral goodness; when he spoke freely on it I cannot express the charm of his eloquence. His whole soul was in his eyes and on his lips.

Never did the face better paint the goodness of the heart.

I do not mention those of our friends whom you have just seen under the eye of Madame Geoffrin and submitted to her discipline. At Baron d'Holbach's and at Helvétius's they were at their ease, and so much the more agreeable ; for mind in its action can only display to advantage its power and grace when there is nothing that confines it ; and there it resembled Virgil's courser : —

“ Qualis, ubi abruptis fugit præsepia vinculis,  
Tandem liber, equus, campoque potitus aperto  
Emicat, arrectisque fremit cervicibus alta  
Luxurians.”

You must feel how grateful it was to me to partake of excellent dinners three times a week in such good company : we were all so happy together that when the fine weather came we mixed with these dinners philosophical walks in the environs of Paris, on the borders of the Seine. On those days we used to make picnic dinners ; and the feast was an ample *matelote* : we visited in their turn the places most celebrated for fine fish, most frequently St. Cloud ; we used to go down there in a morning in a boat, breathing the air of the river, and we returned in the evening through the wood of Boulogne. You will readily believe that in these excursions conversation rarely languished.

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## BOOK VIII.

WHEN, on the recommendation of my Lord Marshal and the Countess de Boufflers, Hume offered Rousseau to procure him a free and tranquil retreat in England,

and Rousseau had accepted this generous offer, Hume, who was acquainted with Baron d'Holbach, informed him, just before his departure, that he was to take Rousseau away with him into his native country. "Sir," said the baron, "you are warning a viper in your bosom : of this I warn you ; you will feel its bite."

The baron had himself welcomed Rousseau and shown him every indulgence ; his house was the rendezvous of those who were called philosophers ; and, in the full security with which the inviolable sanctity of the asylum where they met inspires honorable minds, D'Holbach and his friends had admitted Rousseau to their particular intimacy. In his "*Émile*" you may see how he had noted them. Most certainly had the title of atheism which he has fixed to their society been simply to publish a fact, it would have been odious. But, with respect to the greater number, it was a calumnious accusation, which he well knew. He well knew that the theism of his vicar had among them its proselytes and its zealots. The baron, then, had been taught at his own expense to understand the character of Rousseau. But the good David Hume fancied he saw more passion than truth in the baron's observation. He therefore took Rousseau to England, and there rendered him all the kindest offices of friendship. He believed, as he naturally might, that he had restored the most feeling, and the best of men, to happiness : on this he congratulated himself in all the letters which he wrote to Baron d'Holbach ; and did not cease to combat the bad opinion that the baron entertained of Rousseau. He spoke to him in praise of the kindness, the candor, the ingenuousness of his friend. He used to say, "It is painful to me to think that you are unjust to him. Believe me, Rousseau

can never have a bad heart. The more I see of him the more I esteem and love him." Every courier brought letters from Huene to D'Holbach that repeated the same praises; and the latter, on reading them to us, would say, "He does not know him yet; he will know him ere long." Indeed, a little time afterwards he received a letter in which Huene begins thus: "You were very right, baron! Rousseau is a monster!" "Ah!" said the baron to us, coolly and without surprise, "he knows him at last."

How could so abrupt and so sudden a change have happened in the opinion of the one and in the conduct of the other? You will see it explained in the narrative of facts published by the two parties. Here, what I ought to certify and attest is, that while Rousseau was accusing Huene of deceiving, of betraying, of dishonoring him in London, that same Huene, full of candor, zeal, and friendship, was exerting himself to destroy the fatal impressions he had left at Paris, and to re-establish him in the esteem and benevolence of those who held him in most aversion and contempt.

What ravages had an excess of pride made in a heart naturally gentle and tender! With so much intellect and such talents, what weakness, what littleness, what contemptible meanness in that restless, melancholy, irascible, and vindictive vanity, that was irritated at the bare idea of an attempt to wound it! that fancied injuries without the least proof, and that never pardoned these imaginary crimes! What an important lesson to minds that incline to the vice of vanity! But for that, no one would have been more beloved or more esteemed than Rousseau. It was the poison of his life: to him it rendered services odious, benefactors insupportable, gratitude importunate; made him injure and



repulse friendship; and caused him to live wretched, and die almost abandoned. Let us turn to gentler objects, that relate more nearly to myself.

Neither the pleasant life I led at Paris, nor my still more pleasant country excursions, ever stole from my dear Odde and my sister the delicious fortnight which every year was reserved for them, and which I went to pass with them at Saumur. It was there that the whole sensibility of my soul was absorbed in enjoyment. By this happy couple, who loved each other more than they loved life or the light of heaven, I saw myself cherished and revered as the source of their happiness. I could not satiate myself with the inexpressible delight of contemplating my own work, in the happiness of two pure souls, whose every prayer was addressed to heaven for blessings on me. Their tenderness went to my heart; their piety enchanted me. Their manners were, if I may so say, native virtue in all its simplicity. To this continual and uninterrupted enjoyment was added that of seeing them beloved and honored in the town where they lived. Madaine Odde was there quoted as the model for women; the name of M. Odde was synonymous with truth and justice. If the commission of the court of excise, established at Saumur, and the company of the farmers-general had any dispute, Odde was their umpire and their conciliator. I was a witness to this confidence, acquired by one who was as another self to me. I witnessed the love of the people for a man exercising a severe office, against whom no complaints were ever heard, so eminently did his humanity soften all transactions. I myself shared the respect that was paid to this pair. They were perpetually occupied in contriving new pleasures for me, and the few days we passed together were all

days of rejoicing. You would never have been born, my dear children, if my good sister had lived : I should have retired quietly to pass my riper age with her : but she bore in her bosom the germ of that malady that had been fatal to all my family ; and of the dear hope which I had so ardently cherished, I was too soon and too cruelly deprived.

In one of those happy journeys to Saumur, the vicinity of *la terre des ormes* induced me to pay a visit to the Count D'Argenson, who had been minister of war, and whom the king had sent thither in exile. I had not forgotten the kindness he had shown me in the time of his glory. Being young when I wrote a little poem on the establishment of the military school, the principal honor of which was due to him, he had been pleased to set some value on this testimony of my zeal. At his dinners he had presented me to the noblemen of the army as a young man who had claims on his gratitude and protection. He received me in his exile with extreme sensibility. O my dear children ! what an incurable disease is ambition ! What sadness is that of the life of an exiled minister ! Already worn out by labor and study, vexation was completing the ruin of his health. His body was tormented with gout, his mind was still more cruelly tortured by reflection and regret : and, during the kind reception he was pleased to give me, I plainly saw in him the victim of various afflictions.

Walking with him in his gardens, I perceived a marble statue at a distance, and asked him what it was. "It is one," said he, "at which I have no longer the courage to look." He added, as we turned away, "Ah ! Marmontel, if you knew with what zeal I have served him ; if you knew how often he assured

me we should pass our lives together, and that I had no better friend in the world! These are the promises of kings! This their friendship!" So saying, the tears started to his eyes.

In the evening, during supper, we remained alone in the drawing-room. This drawing-room was hung with pictures that represented the battles in which the king had served with him in person. He showed me where they stood during the action; he repeated to me what the king had said; he had not forgotten one word. "Here," added he, speaking of one of these battles, "I was two hours in the firm persuasion that my son was dead. The king had the kindness to appear to sympathize in my affliction. How changed is he now! My sorrows affect him no more." By these ideas he was haunted; and, if he were suffered to indulge them, he sank, buried as it were in his grief. His daughter-in-law, Madame de Voyer, would then hasten to seat herself by his side, press him in her arms, and caress him: while he, like a child, laying his head on the bosom or on the knees of her who sympathized with him, would bathe them with tears that he did not wish to conceal.

This unhappy man, who lived only on boiled fish, on account of his gout, was thereby deprived too of that single pleasure of the senses which would have been grateful to him; for he loved to indulge his appetite. But even the severest regimen did not alleviate his pains. In quitting him, I could not help showing I was strongly affected by his sorrows. "You add to them," said he, "the regret of not having done you service, when to me that would have been so easy." A little time afterwards he obtained leave to be brought to Paris. I saw him arrive there dying, and there I received his last farewell.

These journeys and this absence displeased Madame Geoffrin. During the whole summer I never went to the Academy. She heard me censured: she fancied I was injuring myself essentially by resigning the game to the assiduous academicians (which, with respect to the Olivets, was certainly an idle fear), and I often endured smart reprimands on what she called the inconsistency of my conduct. "What can indeed be more absurd," said she, "than to have desired to belong to the Academy, and not to attend there after having been received?" My excuse was, the example of the greater number still less assiduous than myself. But she retorted, with reason, that I was one of those whose academic functions required assiduity. She had, too, her little personal interest in these remonstrances; for she passed the summers in Paris, and at that time was anxious that her literary society should not be dispersed. I listened to her counsel with a respectful modesty, and the next day stole away as if she had said nothing. It was very natural that her kindness for me should have cooled; but by being entertaining at a single dinner I could reconcile myself to her, and on serious occasions she recollected her affection for me. I experienced it in two disorders with which I was attacked at her house. One was that same fever which has seized me five times in my life, and which will eventually carry me: it attacked me while my *Poétique* (Art of Poetry) was in the press. I wanted to add some few articles; and this labor, with which my head was filled, rendered the delirium more fatiguing in the paroxysms of fever. My friends were very uneasy, and Madame Geoffrin was alarmed; but the little physician Geoiglan, who used to attend her servants, restored me to perfect health.

My other disorder was a cold of a singular kind ; it was a viscous humor that obstructed the organ of respiration, attended with all the effort of a violent cough, though I could not expectorate. You may conceive that, after having seen all my family die in consumptions, I had some reason to think it was my turn. This I believed ; and, deprived of sleep, growing visibly thin, in short, finding myself on the decline, and concluding that the last period of the disease would soon announce itself by the customary symptoms, I resolved honorably to employ the little time that I might have left, and thought only of selecting some literary subject that might fully possess my fancy, and which, after having occupied my last moments, might leave some worthy traces of my memory.

One of my friends had given me a print of Belisarius, after the picture from Vandyke, which often attracted my notice, and I was astonished that poets had drawn nothing from a subject so moral and so interesting. I conceived the desire of treating it myself, in prose ; and, as soon as this idea was impressed on my mind, my malady was suspended as if by a sudden charm. O marvellous power of imagination ! The pleasure of inventing my fable, the care of arranging and developing it, the impressive interest which the first sketch of the situations and scenes I meditated excited in me, all dwelt so much on my mind, and so detached me from myself, as to render credible whatever is related of ecstatic raptures. My lungs were oppressed, I breathed painfully, I had a most violent convulsive cough ; and I forgot them all ! I could scarcely perceive their existence. My friends came to see me, and spoke of my illness ; I answered like a man absorbed in other meditations : I was thinking of

Belisarius. My wakefulness, that till then had been so painful, had no longer its weariness, nor the torment of inquietude. My nights, like my days, were passed in contemplating the adventures of my hero. I did not the less exhaust myself; and this continued exertion would have completely ended me, if a remedy had not been found for my complaint. It was Gatti, a physician of Florence, a celebrated promoter of inoculation, skilful in his profession, and a most engaging man, who called to see me, and saved my life. "It is only necessary," said he, "to dissolve that thick and glutinous humor which impedes the action of the lungs; and the remedy is not unpleasant: you must drink plentifully of oxymel." I only therefore diluted, mixed, and warmed some excellent honey and vinegar; and the salutary use of the syrup formed by this mixture cured me in a very short time. I had then been more than three months in the firm persuasion that I was dying; but in those three months my work had advanced: the chapters that required historical study were all that remained to be composed. The labor of the imagination was performed; and that part was the most interesting.

If this work is of a graver character than my other writings, it is because, while composing it, I fancied I was uttering my last words, — *novissima verba*, as the ancients used to say. I first tried what effect the reading of it would have on the mind of Diderot, and secondly on that of the hereditary Prince of Brunswick, now the reigning duke. Diderot was highly pleased with the moral part; he thought the political too concise, and advised me to extend it.

The Prince of Brunswick, who was then on his travels through France, after having waged war against

us with the loyalty of chivalry and the valor of a hero, enjoyed that high esteem at Paris which his virtues merited, a more flattering homage than the customary respect paid to men of his birth and rank. He was desirous of being present at a private sitting of the French Academy, an honor that till then had been reserved for crowned heads. In that sitting I read an ample extract from "Belisarius," and had the pleasure of seeing the face of the young hero beam with animation at the images presented to him, while his eyes were suffused in tears.

He was particularly fond of the society of men of letters, and valued it highly, as you will presently see. Helvétius invited him to dine with us; and he owned he had never enjoyed a dinner so much in his life. I certainly did not merit to be particularly remarked, yet I was so. Helvétius having told the prince that he found a considerable likeness between him and the Pretender, and the prince having answered that several persons had already made the same observation, I said, in a half-whisper, "Had the likeness been somewhat more perfect, Prince Edward would have been King of England." These words were heard, the prince felt them, and I saw him blush from modesty and bashfulness.

I was very certain that the success which the reading of "Belisarius" had obtained at the Academy would at least be equalled by the disapprobation it would excite at the Sorbonne. But that was not what disturbed me; and, provided the court and the parliament did not interfere, I was willing enough to engage the theologians. I therefore took every precaution to have no enemies but them. The Abbé Terray was not yet in the ministry; but in the parliament, of which he was

a member, he had the greatest credit. I went with Madame Gaubard, his friend, to pass some time at his country-seat of La Motte, and there I read to him "Belisarius." Although nature had given him but little sensibility, he showed some at this reading. After I had interested him in my behalf, I told him in confidence that I was apprehensive of some hostility on the part of the Sorbonne, and asked him if he thought that the parliament would condemn my book in case it should be censured. He assured me that the parliament would take no part in the affair, and promised to be my defender if any one should attack it there.

This was not all. I wanted it to be privileged, and to have an assurance that this privilege should not be revoked. I had no personal interest with old Maupeou, then keeper of the seals. But the wife of my bookseller, Madame Merlin, was acquainted with and patronized by him. I employed her to sound him, and he promised us all his favor. It remained for me to secure the favor of the court, and here the perilous part of my book was not theology. I dreaded allusions, malicious applications, and the accusation of having thought, not of Justinian, but some one else, when I painted so feeble and deluded a monarch. Unhappily, there was but too much analogy between the two reigns; the King of Prussia felt it so well that, after he had received my work, he wrote to me with his own hand, at the bottom of his secretary Lecat's letter: "I have just begun your "Belisarius"; you are very bold!" Others might say it; and, had my enemies attacked me on that quarter, I had been ruined.

However, no direct precautions could be taken in this respect. The least inquietude shown by me



would have given the alarm and convicted me. No one would have dared to encourage or promise me assistance; and the first counsel I should have received would have been to throw my book into the fire, or to efface from it all that could be susceptible of allusion; and how much must I have effaced!

I assumed an aspect that was the reverse of that of inquietude. I wrote to the minister of the king's household, the Count de St. Florentin, to say that I was on the point of publishing a work, the subject of which seemed worthy to interest the heart of the king; that I was ardently desirous of his Majesty's permission to dedicate it to him, and that, in giving it to him (the minister) to examine, I would entreat him in person to solicit this favor for me. For this purpose I begged a moment's audience of the count, which he granted.

In confiding my manuscript to the count, I confessed there was one chapter with which fanatic theologians might probably be dissatisfied. "It is very much to my interest, then," said I, "that this secret should not be disclosed; and I entreat you, count, not to suffer my manuscript to leave your closet." As he had some friendship for me, he readily gave me his promise; which he kept. But, a few days afterwards, returning me the book, which he had either read or had employed some one to read, he told me that the religion of "Belisarius" would not suit the taste of the theologians: that my work would probably be censured by them; that, for that reason only, he dared not propose to the king to accept the dedication. On which I entreated him to keep my secret, and I withdrew satisfied.

What indeed was my object? To have at court a witness of the intention I had expressed of dedicating.

my work to the king ; and, consequently, a proof that nothing was more distant from my thoughts than to write a satire on his reign ; which was the simple truth. Armed with this defence, I was once more tranquil on that score. But I had to pass under the eyes of a censor ; and, instead of one, I had two given me ; the literary censor not daring to take on himself to approve what regarded theology.

“ Belisarius ” was now submitted to the examination of a doctor of the Sorbonne. His name was Chevrier. A week after I had sent him my work I called on him. When returning it, he was loud in its praises ; but when I cast my eyes on the last sheet I did not see his approbation. “ Have then the kindness,” said I, “ just to write two words here.” His answer was a smile. “ What ! sir,” I urged, “ do you not approve it ? ” “ No, sir ; God forbid ! ” answered he, mildly. “ And may I at least know what you find in it so censurable ? ” “ Very little in detail, but much on the whole ; and the author knows too well in what spirit he has written his book, to require that I should affix my approbation.” I pressed him to explain himself. “ No, sir,” said he, “ you understand me perfectly ; I understand you as well ; let us not lose time by any discussion ; but seek another censor.” Fortunately I found one who was less difficult, and “ Belisarius ” was printed.

As soon as it appeared the Sorbonne was in an uproar ; and the wise doctors resolved, in full council, to subject it to their censure. To many people this censure was a formidable thing ; and several of my friends were of the number. The alarm spread ; and they advised me to appease, if it were possible, the fury of these doctors ; but other friends, more firm, more jeal-

ous of my philosophical honor, exhorted me not to bend. I encouraged both, told my secret to neither, and began by listening attentively to the public.

My book sold rapidly; the first edition of it was sold off; I pressed forward the second; I hastened the third. There were nine thousand copies of it sold before the Sorbonne had extracted from it what they had determined to censure; and, thanks to the noise these doctors made about the fifteenth chapter, no other was mentioned: it was to me like the tail of Alcibiades' dog. I rejoiced to see how essentially they served me by thus diverting attention. My part was to appear neither feeble nor mutinous, and to gain time, in order that the editions of my book might multiply and spread through Europe. I therefore kept myself on the defensive, without the air of fearing the Sorbonne or that of braving it, when an abbé, who has himself had powerful enemies to combat, the Abbé Georgel, came to invite me to accept the archbishop as a mediator; assuring me that if I would call on him I should be well received, and that he knew he was disposed to negotiate a pacific accommodation with the theologians in my behalf. Nothing could accord better with my plan than conciliatory advances. I went to the prelate, who received me with a paternal air, calling me always "My dear Mr. Marinontel." I was touched with the kindness which these gentle words seemed to express. I have since learned that it was his manner of being gracious when he spoke to the lower class of the people.

I assured him of my good faith, of my respect for religion, of the desire I had not to leave any doubt concerning my doctrine or that of my book; and only asked him as a favor to be admitted to explain myself, before him and his doctors, on all the points which

should appear culpable to them in this work. The part of mediator and of conciliator seemed to give him pleasure. He promised me to act, and he bade me call on the syndic of the Sorbonne, Doctor Riballier, and explain myself to him personally.

I went to Riballier. Our conversations and my correspondence with him are printed: I refer you to them.

The other doctors, who were assembled by the archbishop at his own house, whither I went to confer with them, were somewhat less uncivil than Riballier. But in our conference they too chose perpetually to change the passages, in order to pervert the sense. Armed with patience and moderation, I rectified the text which they had altered, and explained to them my ideas, offering to insert these explanations in notes in my book; and the archbishop was well satisfied with me; but I cannot say the same of the other gentlemen. "All that you are telling us is very useless," concluded the Abbé le Fèvre, an old caviller, who was only known in the school by the name of "la Grande Cateau," "you must absolutely strike out the fifteenth chapter from your book; the venom is there."

"If what you ask of me were possible," I answered, "perhaps I should do it for the love of peace. But at present there are forty thousand copies of my work scattered over Europe; and in all the editions that have been published, and that which will soon appear, the fifteenth chapter is printed, and always will be printed. What would it now avail to publish an edition of it without this chapter? No one would buy it thus mutilated; it would be money lost to me and my bookseller." "Very well," said he, "then your book must be censured without mercy." "True, without

mercy, Mr. Abbé," I replied, "I expect no less, if it be you who are to dictate the censure. But his grace the archbishop will be my witness, that to appease you I have done all that you could reasonably require."

"Yes, my dear Mr. Marmontel," said the archbishop, "on many points I have been pleased with your good faith and docility. But there is one article of which I require from you an authentic and formal recantation; it is that of toleration." "If your grace," said I, "will be pleased to cast your eyes on a few lines that I have written this morning, you will there see, clearly explained, my personal opinion on that subject and its motives." I presented to him the note that you will find printed at the end of "Belisarius." He read it in silence, and passed it to the doctors. "Ah!" said they, "commonplace arguments a thousand times repeated, a thousand times confuted, that are but the refuse of the schools." "You treat with very great contempt," said I, "the authority of the fathers of the church and that of St. Paul, by which my motives are supported." They answered that the writings of the fathers of the church were an arsenal in which all parties found arms; and that the passage of St. Paul which I quoted proved nothing.

"Well, then," I replied, "since your authority only should be law, what do you ask of me?" "The right of the sword," they replied, "to exterminate heresy, irreligion, impiety, and bind all to the yoke of faith." I waited for them to come to that, in order to retire in good order, and intrench myself in a post where they could not attack me. *Præmunitum, atque ex omni parte causæ septum* (De Or. l. 3). I answered, that the sword was among those "carnal" weapons which St. Paul had reproved, when he had said, *Arma*

*militiæ nostræ non carnalia sunt*; and at these words I was going to withdraw. The prelate detained me, and, pressing my hands between his, conjured me, in a pathetic tone, that was truly laughable, to subscribe to that atrocious dogma. "No, my lord," said I, "if I had signed it, I should think I had dipped my pen in blood; I should think I had approved all the cruelties committed in the name of religion." "You affix, then," said Le Fèvre, with his doctorial insolence, "a great importance and a great authority to your opinion?" "I know, Mr. Abbé," I replied, "that my authority is nothing; but my conscience is something; and it is that which, in the name of humanity, in the name of religion itself, forbids me to approve persecution. 'Defendenda religio est, non occidendo, sed moriendo; non sævitiâ, sed patientiâ . . . si sanguine, si tormentis, si malo religionem defendere velis; jam non defendetur, sed polluetur atque violabitur.' This is the language of Lactantius, it is that of Tertullian, it is that of St. Paul; and you will allow me to think that they were at least your equals."

"Come," said he to his brethren, "let's say no more. The gentleman chooses to be censured; he shall be so." Thus our conferences finished. What was precious to me was the result I had drawn from them. The question here involved no little theological chicanery, in which I should have been exposed to the cavils of the school; it was a point of controversy, reduced to the most simple, the most striking, and the most precise terms. "They have wanted," I could say, "to make me recognize the right of forcing belief, of employing the sword, the torture, the scaffold, and the stake for that purpose; they have wanted to make me approve those who preached the gospel, poniard

in hand ; and I have refused to subscribe to that abominable doctrine. It is for this that the Abbé le Févre has declared that I should be censured without mercy. This recapitulation, which I was active in spreading about town, at court, in the parliament, and in the councils, rendered the Sorbonne odious ; at the same time my friends exerted themselves to make it ridiculous, and for that I relied on them.

The first operation of the theologians was to extract from my work the passages they meant to condemn. It was who should have the glory of discovering the greatest number of them. They picked them curiously, like pearls that each was emulous of adding to the store. After having collected thirty-seven of them, finding that number sufficient, they published the list under the title of " Indiculus." Voltaire added to it the epithet of " Ridiculus." Never did adjective and substantive agree better together ; " Indiculus Ridiculus " seemed made for each other ; they remained inseparable. M. Turgot exposed the folly of the doctors in another way. As he was a good theologian himself, and a still better logician, he first established this evident and universally acknowledged principle, that, of two contradictory propositions, if one be false, the other is necessarily true. He then placed in opposition, in two parallel columns, the thirty-seven propositions reprov'd by the Sorbonne and the thirty-seven contradictory ones, very exactly drawn out. There was no medium ; in condemning the former, the theologians must absolutely adopt and profess the latter. Now, among these there was not a single one which was not revolting for its horror or ridiculous for its absurdity. This beam of light, thrown judiciously on the doctrine of the Sorbonne, exposed it in its native

deformity. In vain did they wish to withdraw their "Indiculus"; it was too late; the blow was struck.

Voltaire undertook to make the public laugh at the syndic Riballier and his scribe Cogé, a professor in that same Mazarin college of which Riballier was headmaster, and who under his direction had written a slanderous libel against "Belisarius" and myself. At the same time, with the shaft of ridicule which he handled so well, Voltaire launched with all his might on the whole Sorbonne; and with his little sheets that arrived from Geneva, and that circulated in Paris, amused the public at the expense of the doctors. Others of my friends, alike dexterous at reasoning and ridicule, had also the friendship to undertake my defence; so that the decree of the theological tribunal was dishonored and scouted before it had appeared.

While the Sorbonne, the fury of which these vexations increased, was laboring with all its power to render "Belisarius" heretical, deistical, impious, "the enemy of the throne and the altar" (for these were her great war-horses), I was continually receiving letters from the sovereigns of Europe, and from the most enlightened men, bestowing praises on my work, which they called the breviary of kings. The Empress of Russia caused it to be translated into the Russian language, and dedicated to an archbishop of her empire. The Empress Queen of Hungary, in spite of the Archbishop of Vienna, had ordered it to be printed in her states; she who was so severe with regard to those writings which attacked religion. I did not neglect, as you may suppose, to communicate its universal success to the court and to the parliament, and neither the one nor the other had any inclination to share the ridicule lavished on the Sorbonne.



Circumstances being thus favorable, and my presence no longer necessary at Paris, I employed the time, which the doctors took to fabricate their censure, in the sacred duties of friendship.

Madame Filleul was dying of a slow fever, occasioned by an acrimonious humor in the blood, and for which the most skilful of our physicians, Bouvart, had prescribed the waters and baths of Aix-la-Chapelle. The young Countess de Sérán accompanied her there; but, in the state in which the patient was, the assistance of a man was necessary to them. Their friend Bouret entreated me to be their companion. I considered it my duty to oblige them; and as soon as they learned my answer Madame de Sérán wrote me this note:—

“Is it really true that you intend going with us to the waters? I can scarcely believe it, though it is my greatest wish. I dare not indulge the hope, which your occupations, your affairs, and your pleasures all forbid. Assure me of it yourself, if you wish I should be convinced; and, if you do, believe me, I shall esteem this mark of friendship as one of the greatest that can be given. Madame Filleul dares not flatter herself more than I. But you would perhaps be determined to comply by the desire she shows and the gratitude she expresses.”

I set off with them. Madame Filleul was so ill, and Madame de Sérán was so persuaded that her friend would die on the road, that she cautioned me to take mourning with me. Arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle with this courageous woman, who, with scarcely a breath of life, did not cease still to smile at the gayety we affected, the physician of the place was consulted; he found her too much enfeebled to support the bath, and

began by making her try the waters very gently. The effect of their virtue was such that, the eruption of the humors having restored the patient to life, in a few days she regained strength, and was capable of supporting the bath. A prodigious change was then operated, as by miracle. The eruption was complete over the whole body ; and the fair patient, feeling herself reanimated, went alone, walked out, and made us admire the progress of her recovery, appetite, and strength. Alas ! in spite of our entreaties and remonstrances, she abused this prompt convalescence by refusing to continue the gentle regimen that was prescribed : still, in spite of her intemperance, she would have been saved, had it not been for the fatal imprudence she committed, without our knowledge, just as her recovery was completed.

M. de Marigny, whose sister was dead, and who, wishing to indulge his taste and secure his happiness, had married the eldest daughter of Madame Filleul, the idol of us all, the beautiful, the intelligent, the charming Julie ; yielding to the desire his wife expressed of coming to see her mother, brought her to us, and, accompanied by the celebrated designer Cochin, at the same time made a journey through Holland and Brabant, in order to see the pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools.

I have already given you the character of this worthy, interesting, and unhappy man. All the charms that can be wished for in a young woman, whether in person or in mind, disposition, sweetness, ingenuousness, kindness, gayety, abundant wit, and sound reason, each cultivated with the greatest care, were united in his young wife. But, tormented as he was by a melancholy self-love, he had scarcely married

her when he chose to be jealous of the tenderness she entertained for her mother, and of the friendship, which, from her infancy, had subsisted between her and Madame de Séran. He witnessed this mutual sensibility on their seeing each other again; but he dissembled the vexation it gave him, and the little time he passed with us was obscured by no cloud. He even expressed affectionate feelings for Madame Filleul. "I leave our dear Julie with you," said he; "it is very right that she should pay attention to the health of her mother. In a little time I shall return to take her back, and I hope I shall then find the health that is so precious to us all perfectly re-established." He said some kind things, too, to the Countess de Séran, and left us all persuaded that he went away tranquil. But in him the least grain of ill-humor was like a leaven that quickly fermented, and whose sourness communicated itself to the whole mass of his ideas. From the moment he was alone, and abandoned to his own thoughts, he imagined his wife forgetting him by the side of her mother, and, more at liberty, rejoicing with us at her separation from him. "She had no love for him; it was not for him she lived; he was far from being what was dearest to her on earth": such were the reflections that occupied his gloomy mind. He had more than once confided the sad secret to me. Yet his letters were very kind during the whole of his journey, and, till his return, we received nothing of what was passing in him. Let us leave him on his travels, and speak a little of the life we led at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Although Madame Filleul, naturally lively, indulgent to her will and appetite, in spite of us, did all that could retard her recovery, the virtue of the waters and

the baths did not fail to expel the acrimonious tendency with which she every day impregnated her blood, by spicy gravies and ragoûts, the seasoning of which to her was poison. As she boasted that she was cured, we, without being so well convinced as herself, believed it enough to congratulate ourselves. Our ladies then partook of all the pleasures of the place, in which I shared. After dinner, walking was the amusement; in the evening, dancing at the assembly of the Ridotto, where there was deep play; but we did not game. The dances were all English, very pretty, and well danced. It is to me a curious sight to see those chains of men and women of all the Northern nations, Russians, Poles, Germans, and especially English, assembled and mixed together by the common attraction of pleasure. I need not tell you that two French women of rare beauty, the elder of whom was but twenty, had only to show themselves to attract attention. In a morning then, while all were paying their court to them, either at home or on the public walk, I had some solitary hours. I employed them in literary labors. I wrote the "Incas."

At that time two of our French bishops came to the waters, and took apartments in our neighborhood. One of them, Broglie, Bishop of Noyon, was an invalid; the other accompanied him: it was Marbœuf, Bishop of Autun, who has since been minister. The author of the book which the Sorbonne was at that very moment censuring was to them an object of curiosity. They came to see me, and invited me to walk. I was well aware that these prelates wanted to wrestle with me; and, as the game pleased me, I willingly entered the ring.

They began, as you may suppose, by talking of

"Belisarius." They expected to find me terribly alarmed at the decree which the Sorbonne was about to fulminate against me, and were quite surprised to see me so tranquil under this anathema. "Belisarius," said I, "is an old soldier, an honest man, and a Christian in his soul, loving his religion from his heart and with good faith; he believes all that the gospel teaches him, and only rejects what is not there. It is to the black phantoms of superstition, it is to the monstrous horrors of fanaticism, that Belisarius refuses credit. I have proposed to the Sorbonne to render this distinction evident in explanatory notes, which I would add to my book. This conciliatory proposal it has refused; it has required that the fifteenth chapter should be expunged from a work of which forty thousand copies are already sold: a puerile demand; for the mutilated edition would have been rejected as refuse, and would only have ruined me. Lastly, it has insisted that I should recognize the dogma of civil intolerance, the right of the sword, the right of proscription, of exile, of dungeons, poniards, torture, and the stake, in order to force belief in the religion of the Lamb; and in the Lamb of the gospel I have not chosen to recognize the tiger of the inquisition. I have adhered to the doctrine of Lactantius, of Tertullian, of St. Paul, and to the spirit of the gospel. It is for this that the Sorbonne is actually occupied in fabricating a pitiless censure on Belisarius, Lactantius, Tertullian, St. Paul, and on all who think like them. Take care of yourselves, my lords, for it is possible that you may be of the number."

"But why do philosophers," said the Bishop of Autun, "presume to speak of theology?" "Why do theologians," replied I, "presume to tyrannize over mind, and to excite princes to employ torture in order

to force belief? Are princes the judges on articles of religion and on the objects of faith?" "Certainly not," he answered; "princes are not the judges." "And you make them the executioners!" "I know not," replied he, "why theologians should now be accused of a kind of persecution which they no longer exercise. Never did the church show more moderation in the use of its power." "It is true, my lord," said I, "that she uses it more soberly; she has tempered it in order to preserve it." "Why, then," insisted he, "choose this very time to attack her?" "Because men do not write only for the moment in which they write," answered I; "it is to be feared that the future may resemble the past, and they seize the moment when the waters are low to work at the mounds." "Ah! the mounds!" said he: "it is the pretended philosophers who break them down, and who aim at nothing less than the total destruction of religion." "Leave to this charitable, this beneficent and peaceful religion its true character, and I dare assert," replied I, "that incredulity itself will not dare to attack it, and that impiety will be silent in its presence. 'T is not its pure tenets, nor its morality, nor even its mysteries, that raise it enemies. 'T is the violent and fanatic opinions with which a dark theology has mixed its doctrine; these are what make honest minds rebel. Let it be disengaged from this mixture; let it be purified, let it be brought back to its primitive sanctity; then will those who attack it be the public enemies of the wretches it consoles, of the oppressed it relieves, and of the feeble it supports."

"Say what you will," replied the bishop, "its doctrine is steadfast, the edifice is cemented, and we will never suffer a single stone of it to be displaced." I

reminded him "that the art of mining was carried to great perfection; that with a little powder very high and very solid towers had been completely overthrown, and even the hardest rocks blown in pieces. Heaven forbid," added I, "that I should wish my presage to be accomplished! I sincerely love and revere, from the bottom of my heart, this consoling religion; but if ever it dies among us, theological fanaticism will alone be the cause of its death; fanaticism alone will have struck the mortal blow."

Then retiring a little from me, and speaking in a low voice to the Bishop of Noyon, I thought I heard him say, "It will last longer than ourselves." He was mistaken. Turning again to me, "If you love religion," insisted he, "why join with those who meditate its ruin?" "I only join with those," answered I, "who love it as I do, and who desire that it should show itself such as Heaven gave it, pure, single, and unspotted, — *sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol. . . .*" He added, smiling, "*terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.*" "Yes," replied I, "terrible to the wicked, to the fanatic, to the impious; but now only terrible with the arms that are its own, which are neither sword nor fire." Such, nearly, was our first conversation.

Another time, as he perpetually recurred to his observation that philosophers assumed too much liberty: "It is true, my lord," said I, "that they sometimes presume to perform very noble functions for you; but it is only when you will not deign to fulfil them yourselves." "What functions?" asked he. "Those of preaching publicly truths that are too rarely told to sovereigns, to their ministers, or to the flatterers that surround them. Since the exile of Fénelon, or, if you

will, since that little course of touching morality given by the direction of Massillon to Louis XV. when a child, — lessons, alas! that were premature, and therefore useless, — have public vices and public crimes found in the priesthood a single courageous assailant? In the pulpit they dare indeed to rebuke trifling errors and check common frailties; but the disastrous passions, the political scourges, — in a word, the moral scourges of human evils, — who dares to attack? Who dares to encounter pride, ambition, vainglory, false zeal, the fury of domination and usurpation? Who dares call them to account, before God and man, for the tears and blood of their numberless victims?" I then supposed a Chrysostom in the pulpit; and, in exposing the subjects that would invoke his eloquence, I was perhaps at that moment eloquent myself.

Be that as it may, my two prelates, after having felt my pulse two or three times, found my disease incurable; and one day, when showing them the manuscript of the "Incas," which was lying on my table, I said, "There is a work that will reduce your doctors to the alternative of burning the gospel or of respecting in Las Casas, that apostle of the Indies, the same sentiments and the same doctrine that they condemn in 'Belisarius.'" They saw they could no longer hope anything from me: their zeal discouraged, or rather their curiosity satisfied, they left me the free disposal of time that would have been lost in discussion. The wish to make me a philosophical theologian, or to transform them to theological philosophers, was vain.

The labor which my book of the "Incas" still required was interrupted in behalf of that of a memorial in which I have pleaded the cause of the northern peasantry, and which is printed in the collection of my works.



I had just read in the newspapers that, at the Economical Society at Petersburg, an anonymous promoter of philosophical inquiry proposed a prize of a thousand ducats for the best work on this question: "Is it advantageous to a state that the peasant should be a proprietor of land, or that he should have only movable goods? And how far should the right of the peasant over this property extend for the advantage of the state?"

I concluded that this anonymous promoter of inquiry was the Empress of Russia herself; and since on this great object she was desirous that the truth should be known in her states, I resolved to show it whole and entire. One of the Russian ministers, M. de Saldern, had come to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the waters. I frequently saw him, and he spoke to me of the affairs of the north with as much openness of heart as a prudent minister is permitted to speak. It was through him that my memorial reached its destination. It did not obtain the prize, and I foresaw that it would not; but it made its impression, and of this I received testimonies. Thus my solitary hours were usefully occupied. But an object not less interesting to me than my literary occupation, and, to say the truth, still more attractive, was the conversation of my three ladies, all three of different dispositions, but so analogous that their colors harmonized and melted into each other like those of the rainbow. Thoughts and sentiments thus harmoniously blended make the charm of conversation. Unity of sentiment begins by being agreeable and finishes by being vapid. It is for this reason Madame Filleul used to say that she loved contrariety; that nothing else was natural and sincere; that nature had never made two things equal, neither two eggs,

two leaves, two minds, nor two tempers; and that, wherever we thought we saw a perfect likeness of sentiments and opinions, there was dissimulation and complaisance on the one side or the other, and often on both.

Madame de Séran was the daughter of a M. de Bulioud, a man of family, without fortune, and formerly governor of the pages of the Duke of Orleans. By a most strange fatality, and which I cannot explain, this young lady from the age of fifteen had been the object of her father's violent and sombre spleen and of her mother's aversion. Beautiful as an angel, and even more interesting for the charin of her gentle temper and simple innocence than for the brilliancy of her beauty, she did but weep and lament her sad and cruel fate, when her father suddenly resolved to marry her, giving her as her dowry his place of governor of the pages, which he resigned to his son-in-law. This husband whom he presented to her was likewise of an ancient family, but with no other property than a little estate in Normandy. To be poor was a trifle. M. de Séran was ugly, and of a most forbidding ugliness; red-haired, ill-made, with only one eye, and in that one a cataract; in other respects the best and most honorable of men. When he was presented to our beautiful Adélaïde, she turned pale with horror, and her heart shrunk back with disgust and repugnance. The presence of her relations made her endeavor to conceal this first impression from him, as much as possible; but M. de Séran perceived it. He requested he might be allowed to pass a few moments tête-à-tête with her; and, when they were left alone, "Mademoiselle," said he, "you find me very ugly; and my ugliness frightens you. I perceive it; you

may confess it without artifice. If you think that this repugnance is invincible, tell me so confidently, as to your friend: your secret shall be kept; I will take the rupture on myself, and your parents shall know nothing of the confession you shall have made me. At the same time, were it possible to render these natural defects supportable to you in a husband, and were nothing requisite for that purpose but the cares and attentive devotion of a sincere and tender friendship, you might expect them from the heart of an honest man, who would be grateful to you through life for not having rejected him. Consult your own feelings, and then answer me: you are perfectly free."

Adélaïde was wretched; she saw in this honorable man so sincere a desire of procuring her a happier lot, that she hoped she should have the courage to accept him. "Sir," said she, "what I have just heard, with the character of kindness and probity which your language bespeaks, inspires the sincerest esteem. Give me a few hours for reflection, and come for your answer to-morrow."

Nothing less was requisite than the most urgent counsels of reason and present unhappiness to determine her; but the esteem she felt for M. de Séran at length triumphed over all her repugnance. "Sir," said she, on seeing him again, "I am persuaded that ugliness, as well as beauty, is soon forgotten; and that the only qualities, the impression of which is not enfeebled by habit, and whose value is every day more intimately felt, are those of the heart. Such I find in you; I desire no others; and I confide to your honor the care of my happiness. It will be grateful to me to contribute to yours."

Thus Mademoiselle de Bulioud was married before

she had completed her fifteenth year; and M. de Séran was to her all that he had promised to be. I do not say that this union had the charin of love; but it had the sweets of peace, of friendship, and of the tenderest esteem. The husband, without inquietude, beheld his wife surrounded by adorers; and the wife, by her correct and modest conduct, honored, in the eyes of the public, the confidence of her husband.

Although the noise that "Belisarius" then made, and the celebrity that the "Moral Tales" had acquired in the North of Europe, might already have made me somewhat remarkable among the crowd in which I lived, an adventure, that was honorable enough for me, drew on me new attention. One morning, in passing by the principal inn where the Ridotto was held, I heard some one call me by name. I raise my head, and see from the window from which the voice proceeded, a man, who exclaims, "'Tis he," and disappears. I had not recognized him; but he instantly came from the inn and ran to embrace me, saying, "What a happy accident to meet you here!" It was the Prince of Brunswick. "Come," added he, "let me present you to my wife; she will be very happy to see you." On entering her room, "Madame," said he, "you were very desirous of knowing the author of 'Belisarius' and the 'Moral Tales.' Here he is: I present him to you." Her royal highness, the sister of the King of England, received me with the same joy and cordiality with which the prince introduced me. At that moment the magistrates of the city were waiting for them at the fountain, in order to open it before them and show them the concretion of pure sulphur which was formed in stalactites under the stone of the reservoir; a kind of honor that was paid only to

people of the first distinction. "Go there without me," said the prince to his wife; "I shall pass the time more agreeably with Marmontel." I would have declined this favor; but was obliged to remain with him, tête-à-tête at least a quarter of an hour; and he employed it in talking to me with enthusiasm of the literary men he had seen in Paris, and of the happy moments he had passed in their company. There the afflicting idea was pressed on his mind that all hope of enticing us out of our country must be abandoned, and that no sovereign in Europe was powerful enough to afford any compensation for the happiness of living together in social intercourse.

At last, to persuade him to go to the fountain, I was obliged to express a wish of seeing it myself, and I had the honor to accompany him there.

As they were to leave Aix-la-Chapelle on the following day, the princess had the kindness to invite me to go and pass the evening with them at the Ridotto. At the moment I arrived she was dancing, and she instantly quitted the dance, of which she was passionately fond, to come and converse with me. Till one in the morning she, her maid of honor (Miss Stuart), and I kept ourselves in a corner, talking of all that this charming princess was desirous to hear of me. The flattery of her kindness may have deceived me, but I thought her natural manner highly intelligent and charming. "How, then, have you been educated," I asked, "to have in your character that adorable simplicity? How little you resemble the persons I have seen of your rank!" "It is, that at your court," answered Miss Stuart, "princes are instructed how to govern, and at ours how to please."

The princess, before she left me, had the goodness

to request I would promise her to make a journey to England while she herself should be there. "I will receive you," said she; "and it shall be I who will present you to the king, my brother." I promised her that, unless some insurmountable obstacle prevented me, I would go to pay my court to her in London; and I took leave of her and her worthy husband, sensibly affected by the marks of kindness I had received from them. I was not the prouder for this favor; but in the circle at the Ridotto I thought I perceived that I was more respected. There may seem a vanity, my dear children, in detailing these circumstances; but it is very right you should learn that, having some talent, joined with polite and unaffected manners, you may everywhere command esteem.

M. de Marigny returned from his journey into Holland; he intended to take his wife back with him to Paris. But, Madame Filleul having expressed to him the pleasure he would give her by leaving her daughter with her till the end of the bathing season, a period that was not distant, he appeared to yield willingly to the wishes of a sick mother; and, as he was desirous of seeing Spa on his return, our young ladies resolved to accompany him there; they all entreated me to make this little excursion. I know not what presentiment made me insist on keeping Madame Filleul company; but she herself, persisting in the wish to be left alone, obliged me to go. This unfortunate journey announced itself ill. Two Polish gentlemen, who were acquainted with our young ladies, MM. Regewski, thought it would be gallant to accompany them on horseback: M. de Marigny no sooner saw them galloping by the side of the carriage than he fell into a sombre melancholy; and from that moment the

cloud that arose in his mind only blackened and became more stormy.

However, on arriving at Spa he went with us to the assembly of the Ridotto ; but the more brilliant he found it, the more was he struck with the species of emotion that our young ladies had excited the instant they showed themselves there, and the more gloomy was his chagrin. Yet he would not incur the humiliation of showing himself jealous. He chose a more vague pretext.

At supper, as he was melancholy and silent, Madame de Séran and his wife having pressed him to say what was the cause of his sadness, he at last answered that he saw too well his presence was importunate ; that, after all he had done to be loved, he was not so ; that he was hated, detested ; that the request which Madame Filleul had made him was preconcerted ; that they only wished to be rid of him ; that they had accompanied him to Spa only to amuse themselves there ; but that he was not the dupe of this specious artifice, for he very well knew his wife was longing for his departure. She spoke to him with gentleness, telling him he was unjust ; that, if he had expressed the least objection to leave her with her mother, they would neither of them have felt any inclination to abuse his complaisance ; that, besides, though she had left her trunks at Aix-la-Chapelle, she was resolved to go with him. "No, madame," said he, "stay ; it is now too late ; I desire no sacrifices." "Most certainly," replied she, "it is a sacrifice to quit my mother in the state in which she is ; but there is none that I am not ready to make for you." "I will accept none," repeated he, rising from table. Madame de Séran endeavored to appease him ; but he replied, "To you, madame, I

do not address myself. I should have too much to say to you. I only entreat you not to interfere in what passes between Madame de Marigny and myself." He quitted the room abruptly, and left us all three in consternation. After a moment's consultation, we were of opinion that his wife should go to him. She was pale, and in tears. In that situation, she would have moved the heart of a tiger; but he, for fear of being vanquished, had commanded his servants not to suffer her to enter his room, and had ordered post-horses to be put to his chaise at the break of day.

No master was ever so punctually obeyed as he. His valet-de-chambre represented that if he suffered Madame de Marigny to enter the room, he should be turned off instantly, and that his master, in his anger, would be capable of the greatest excesses. We hoped that sleep would calm him a little, and I only requested that they would come to inform me the instant he awoke.

I had not slept at all, I was not even undressed, when they came to tell me he was getting up. I went to him, and in the most moving manner represented to him the state in which he was leaving his wife. "'Tis all pretence," said he; "you know nothing of women; I know them to my sorrow." The presence of his servant imposed silence on me; and when he was ready to set off, "Farewell, my dear friend," said he, pressing my hand; "pity the most wretched of men! Farewell!" and, with an air with which he would have mounted the scaffold, got into his carriage and was driven off.

The grief of Madame de Marigny then changed into indignation. "He disgusts me," said she; "he wishes to make me rebel, and will succeed. I was disposed to love him, Heaven is my witness; I would have made it my



delight, my glory to render him happy ; but he will not be so ; he has sworn to force me to hate him." We passed three days at Spa ; the young ladies in dissipating the sadness that oppressed their hearts, and I in reflecting on the melancholy consequences that might ensue from this excursion. I did not foresee the still more cruel affliction it was to cause us.

In proportion as the blood of our patient was relieved from the impurities it contained, a slight scorbutic humor perpetually formed itself on her skin, and over her whole person ; this humor dried itself to dust and fell away. It was that which had saved her ; and from the moment that the impurity of the blood had thus spread itself over the surface of the body, the physician had considered her as recalled to life. But she, who was disgusted with this affection of the skin, and who found its cure too slow, wanted to accelerate it ; and choosing for that purpose the time of our absence, she had plastered her whole body over with cerate. The transpiration of this humor instantly ceased ; it returned into the blood ; and we found the patient in a more desperate state than ever. She wished to return to Paris ; we brought her back with difficulty, and from that time she did but languish.

In order that she might repose on her journey, we came but a few leagues each day. At Ligèe, where we had slept, a man of respectable appearance entered my room in the morning, and said, " Sir, I learnt yesterday evening that you were here. I am under great obligations to you. I come to thank you for them. My name is Bassompierre. I am a bookseller and printer in this city ; I print your works, for which I have a great sale throughout Germany. I have already printed four large editions of your ' Moral Tales ' ; I am

now upon the third edition of 'Belisarius.'" "What! sir," said I, interrupting him, "do you steal from me the fruit of my labor, and come to boast of it!" "O," replied he, "your privileges do not extend to us. Liège is a free town. We have a right to print whatever is good; in that our trade consists. If your works be not pirated in France, where you are privileged, you will be rich enough. Do me, then, the favor to come and breakfast at my house. You shall see one of the finest printing-offices in Europe, and you will be pleased with the manner in which your works are executed." To see this exhibition I went to Bassompierre's house. The breakfast that awaited me consisted of cold meats and fish. The whole family gave me a most friendly reception. I was at table between Bassompierre's two daughters, who, as they filled my glass with Rhenish wine, said, "Monsieur Marmontel, what are you going to do at Paris, where you are persecuted? Stay here, live at my father's; we have an excellent chamber to give you. We will take care of you. You shall compose quite at your ease, and what you may have written one day shall be printed the next." I was almost tempted to accept the offer. Bassompierre, to indemnify me for his larceny, made me a present of the little edition of Molière which you now read: that book cost me twelve hundred guineas.

At Brussels I had the curiosity to see a rich cabinet of pictures. The amateur who had formed it was (I believe) one Chevalier Vérule, a melancholy and spleumatic man, who, persuaded that a breath of air would be mortal to him, kept himself shut up in his room as in a box. His cabinet was open only to persons of distinction or to famous connoisseurs. I enjoyed neither of these titles. But, after I had understood his character,

I hoped to induce him to receive me favorably. I was introduced to him. "Be not surprised, sir," said I, "that a man of letters, who is acquainted at Paris with the most celebrated artists, and with the lovers of the fine arts, should be desirous of having it in his power to give them news of a man for whom they all entertain the highest esteem. They will know that I have passed through Brussels, and they would not pardon my having been there without having seen you, and without having inquired after your health." "Ah! sir," answered he, "my health is very bad"; and then entered into details of his nervous complaints, his vapors, and the extreme weakness of his organs. I listened; and, after having seriously recommended him to take care of himself, was going to take my leave. "What! sir," said he, "will you go away without just casting your eyes on my pictures?" "I am no connoisseur," said I, "and am not worth the trouble you would have to show them." At the same time I suffered him to conduct me to his treasure; and the first picture that he bade me notice was a very beautiful landscape, by Berghem. "Ah!" exclaimed I, "at first I took that picture for a window, through which I saw the country and those fine cattle." "That," said he with rapture, "is the finest eulogy that has been passed on this picture." I expressed the same surprise and the same illusion on approaching a cabinet that contained a picture by Rubens, representing his three wives, painted as large as life; and thus, successively, I appeared to receive from his most remarkable pictures the impression of truth. He was indefatigable in renewing my surprises: I let him enjoy them as much as he chose; so that at last he told me my instinct judged his pictures better than the acquired knowledge

of many others, who called themselves connoisseurs, and who examine everything, but who feel nothing.

At Valenciennes a curiosity of another kind had nearly proved very unfortunate. As we had arrived early in that city, I thought I might employ the remainder of the evening in walking on the ramparts, to see the fortifications. While I was surveying them, an officer of the guard, at the head of his troop, came to me and roughly said, "What are you doing there?" "I am walking, and looking at these noble fortifications." "Don't you know that it is forbidden to walk on these ramparts and examine the works?" "I certainly did not know it." "Where did you come from?" "Paris." "Who are you?" "A man of letters, who, having never seen a fortified place except in books, was curious to see one in reality." "Where do you lodge?" I named the inn, and the three ladies that I accompanied: I told my name too. "You have the air of being sincere," said he at last; "go back." I did not make him repeat the order.

As I was relating my adventure to our ladies, the commandant of the town entered the room; luckily, he had been particularly patronized by Madame de Pompadour, and came to pay his respects to the sister-in-law of his benefactress. I found him acquainted with what had just happened to me. He told me that I might consider myself very fortunate that they had not imprisoned me. But he offered to conduct me himself the next morning to see all the exterior of the place. I accepted his offer with gratitude, and I had the pleasure of walking round the town leisurely, and without danger.

A short time after our return to Paris we had the misfortune to lose Madame Filleul. Never was a

death more courageous and more tranquil. She was a woman of a very singular disposition, full of wit, and of a wit, the penetration, vivacity, and acuteness of which resembled the look of the eagle; she had nothing that savored either of trick or artifice. I never saw her indulge either in the illusions or in the vanities of her sex: she had its tastes, but they were simple, natural, without whim and without caprice. Her mind was lively, but calm; with feeling enough to be affectionate and beneficent, but not sufficient to be the sport of her passions. Her inclinations were gentle, peaceful, and constant; she indulged them without weakness, but never to excess; she considered the occurrences of life, and the scenes they compose, as a game which she liked to see played, and at which, she said, it was necessary occasionally to know how to play ourselves, without being either knave or dupe. It was thus she conducted herself, with very little attention to her own interests, and with great ardor for those of her friends. As to events, nothing astonished her; and in every situation she had the advantage of coolness and prudence.

On my return from Aix-la-Chapelle I found the censure of the Sorbonne pasted up at the door of the Academy and at that of Madame Geoffrin. But the Swiss of the Louvre seemed to have agreed to daub it with their brooms. The censure and the mandate of the archbishop were read from the pulpit in all the churches of Paris, and they were despised by every class of people. Neither the court nor the parliament took any part in this business. I was only advised to be silent, and "Belisarius" continued to be printed and sold with the privilege of the king. But an event more afflicting than the decrees of the Sorbonne awaited

me on my arrival at Maisons ; it was there that I needed all my courage.

I have mentioned a young niece of Madame Gaulard, and the pleasing custom I had formed of passing the gay season of the year, and sometimes even the winter, in that society. This custom, between the niece and me, was changed to love. We were neither of us rich ; but, with the credit of our friend Bouret, nothing was more easy than to procure for myself, either at Paris or in the provinces, some place lucrative enough to provide us with every comfort we desired. We had confided our desires and our hopes to no one. But, from the liberty we were allowed together, and from the tranquil confidence with which Madame Gaulard herself observed our intimacy, we did not doubt that she would be favorable to us. Bouret, above all, seemed to be so pleased in witnessing our friendship, that I thought myself sure of him ; and as soon as I should have brought back his intimate friend in good health, as I hoped, I intended to entreat him to seriously interest himself in behalf of my fortune and marriage.

But Madame Gaulard had a cousin whom she tenderly loved, and whose fortune was made. This cousin, who was also that of the young niece, fell in love with her, asked her in marriage during my absence, and obtained her without difficulty. She, too young and timid to declare any other attachment, so far engaged herself that I arrived only to be present at the ceremony. They were waiting for a dispensation from Rome to go to the altar ; and I, as the intimate friend of the house, was to be the witness and confidant of all. My situation was painful ; that of the young lady was scarcely less so ; and however tranquil we had resolved

to appear, it is difficult to me to conceive that our sadness did not betray us to the eyes of the aunt and of the future husband. Happily, the liberty of the country permitted us to say to each other a few consoling words, and mutually to inspire each other with the courage we so much wanted. In such a case love in despair saves itself in the arms of friendship: that was our refuge. We promised each other at least to be friends through life; and while our hearts were suffered thus to afford mutual comfort, we were not unhappy. But, till the fatal dispensation should arrive from Rome, it was prudent that I should absent myself; and I had a favorable opportunity for so doing.

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## BOOK IX.

M. DE MARIGNY, at peace with his wife, abridged his visit to Fontainebleau, in order to go with her to Ménars. He was desirous that I should accompany them. His wife entreated me still more earnestly than he. As the confidant of their disputes, I hoped to be able to contribute to their reconciliation; and my gratitude to him, as much as my friendship for her, prompted me to accept their offer. "You cannot think, sir," said he in his letter from Fontainebleau of the 12th of October, 1767, "what pleasure you give me by going to Ménars. I may be permitted to be somewhat jealous of that which Madame de Marigny expresses."

My presence was not useless to them in this journey. More than one cloud was raised between them which it was requisite to dissipate. Even on the road,

while speaking in praise of his wife, M. de Marigny wanted to attribute her faults to the Countess de Séran. But his young wife, who had some dignity, refused to admit that excuse. "I have committed no faults that should affect you," said she, "and you are unjust to attribute any to me; but you are still more so to load my friend with them." And when a few words that were too bitter and too inconsiderate escaped him against this absent friend, "Respect her, sir," said his wife; "you owe it to her, you owe it to me; and I must tell you that you will never abuse her without wounding me to the heart."

It is true that, in the intimacy of these two women, all the care of Madame de Séran was employed in inspiring her friend with gentleness, complaisance, and, if it were possible, with love for a man who, she told her, had amiable qualities, and who, if his violence were tempered and his sourness sweetened, would make a very good husband.

A little strength and dignity of mind were necessary with a man who, possessed of frankness and courage, esteemed in the characters of others what was analogous to his own. The tone we observed with him was therefore that of mild but firm reason; and I fulfilled so well my office of conciliator, that, on quitting them, I left them in perfect harmony. But I had seen enough of them, and above all I had learnt enough from the confidential conversations of his young wife, to be decidedly of opinion that they might esteem, but could never love each other.

In the following spring I went with them again to Touraine. In this journey I had the pleasure of seeing M. de Marigny completely reconciled with Madame de Séran: except a few moments of sour jealousy at the



intimacy of the two ladies, he was rather amiable in their company. With respect to me, he was so pleased to have me as a mediator, that he offered me as a pure gift, for my life, a pretty country house near Ménars. A little grove, a garden, a rivulet of the purest water, a delicious retreat seated on the banks of the Loire; nothing could be more seducing: but this gift was a chain, and I would wear none.

On my return I went to Maisons. That was the retreat which had such charms for me; I loved all who dwelt in it, and I flattered myself that I was beloved by them. I could not have been more free or more at my ease in my own house. If my friends wished to see me, they came to Maisons and were welcomed there. The Count de Creutz was he who took most pleasure in visiting us, and whose society we most relished, because, with the rarest qualities of mind, he was simple and good.

Our walk usually extended to a little wood near Alfort, and there we reposed ourselves in its shade. His soul would then expand and unfold itself with me. The sensibility which he delighted to indulge; the pictures that the observation and study of nature had traced in his memory, and of which his imagination was, as it were, a rich and vast gallery; the high conceptions that meditation had inspired in him, and which his mind poured abundantly into mine, whether he spoke of politics or of morality, of men or of things, of sciences or arts, kept me whole hours attentive, and in a kind of enchantment. His country and his king, Sweden and Gustavus, the objects of his idolatry, were the two subjects of which he spoke with most eloquence and with most rapture. The enthusiasm with which he lavished praises on them would so seize on my mind

and my senses, that I would willingly have followed him beyond the Baltic.

Music was one of his most impassioned pleasures, and beneficence was the soul of all his other virtues.

One day he came to conjure me, in the name of our friendship, to extend my hand to a young man, who, he said, was in despair, and on the point of sinking if I did not save him. "He is a musician," added he, "full of talent, and wants only a pretty comic opera to make his fortune at Paris. He comes from Italy: he has made some essays at Geneva. He arrived with an opera taken from one of your tales (*Les Mariages Samnites*): it has been heard by the directors of the opera-house and refused. The unhappy young man is without any resource; I have advanced him a few guineas; I can do no more; and, as a last favor, he has entreated me to recommend him to you."

Before that period I had done nothing that approached the idea I thought I had conceived of a French poem, suited to Italian music; I did not even believe that I had the talent for it; but to please the Count de Creutz I would have undertaken impossibilities.

I had on my table at that moment one of Voltaire's tales (*L'Ingénu*); I thought it might furnish me with the ground-plan of a little comic opera. "I will try," said I to the Count de Creutz, "whether I can adapt it to the stage, and draw from it feelings and situations favorable to vocal music. Come again in a week, and bring this young man with you." The half of my poem was written when they arrived. Grétry was transported with joy at it, and went to begin his work while I was completing mine. "*Le Huron*" had brilliant success; and Grétry, more modest and more grateful

than he has since been, thinking that his reputation was not yet sufficiently established, solicited me not to abandon him. It was then that I composed "Lucile."

From the still greater success of this last piece, I perceived that the public were disposed to relish theatrical compositions of a character analogous to that of my "Tales"; and, with a musician and actors capable of expressing what I conceived, seeing that I could form pictures whose coloring and shades would be faithfully represented, I felt a very lively charm in this species of creation; for I can say that, in restoring the comic opera, I gave it a new character, and created a new species of it. After "Lucile," I wrote "Sylvain"; after "Sylvain," "L'Ami de la Maison," and "Zémire and Azor"; and our mutual successes increased with every new exertion. No kind of composition ever afforded me purer enjoyment. My choicest actors, Clairval, Caillot, and Madame la Ruette, were the chiefs of their theatre. Madame la Ruette used to invite us to dinner. There I read my poem, and Grétry sang his music. Both being approved in this little council, all was prepared for the representation of the piece, and after two or three rehearsals it was played.

The sincerity of our actors, with respect to us, was perfect; whether for character or song, they knew exactly what would suit them; and their presentiment of effect was more infallible than our own. For myself, I never hesitated to submit to their opinions; sometimes even they accused me of submitting too readily. For instance, in the interval between "Lucile" and "Sylvain," I had finished a comic opera in three acts, taken from my tale of "Le Connoisseur." I read it to the little committee. Grétry was charmed with it,

Madame la Ruelle and Clairval applauded; but Caillot was cold and silent. I took him aside. "You are not satisfied," said I; "speak openly: what do you think of the piece you have just heard?" "I think," said he, "that it is only a diminutive of the '*Métromanie*'; that the ridicule of fine affected wit is not poignant enough for a pit like ours, and that your work may possibly be unsuccessful."

Returning to the fire round which the company were sitting, "Madame and gentlemen," said I, "we are all fools; Caillot alone is right"; and I threw my manuscript into the fire. They cried out that Caillot had made me act like a very madman. Grétry wept for sorrow, and in going away with me he appeared so disconsolate that on quitting him I myself was sad.

The eagerness to deliver him from the state in which I had seen him having prevented sleep, the plan and first scenes of "*Sylvain*" were the fruit of my wakefulness. I was writing them in the morning when Grétry entered my room. "I have not closed my eyes all night," said he. "Nor I neither," answered I. "Sit down and listen to me." I read him my plan, and two scenes. "For effect," added I, "I am sure of my work, and I'll answer for success." He seized on the first two airs, and went away comforted.

It was thus I employed my leisure; and the produce of a light labor augmented every year my little fortune. But it was not so considerable as to induce Madame Gaulard to think it a suitable establishment for her niece; she gave her then another husband, as I have told you; and that society which I had cultivated with so much care was soon dissolved. Another incident threw me into their company.

It was natural that the adventure of "*Belisarius*"

should have cooled in some degree Madame Geoffrin's friendship for me; and that, as she was more ostensibly turned to devotion, she should have some repugnance to lodge a censured author in her house. As soon as I could perceive it, I pretended to wish for a more commodious apartment. "I am very sorry," said she, "that I have nothing better to offer you; but I hope that, though you may cease to live in my house, you will not cease to be of the number of my friends, and of the dinners that unite them." After this audience of leave, I hastened to remove; and a lodging that exactly suited me was offered by the Countess de Séran, in a hotel which the king had given her. When I was on the point of fixing myself there, I found myself obliged to prefer another residence: the incident that determined me was this.

My old friend, Mademoiselle Clairon, having quitted the theatre and taken a commodious house by the Pont-Royal, wished me to live with her. She knew of the engagement I had formed with Madame de Séran; but, as she was acquainted with her kindness and sensibility, she called upon her without my knowledge; and with her theatrical eloquence she related to her the indignities she had endured from the gentlemen of the king's chamber, and the brutal ingratitude with which the public had paid her services and her talents. In her solitary retreat, her greatest consolation would have been to have had her old friend with her. She had a convenient apartment to let to me; she was very sure that I should accept it, if I had not engaged to occupy that which the countess had the kindness to offer me. She entreated her to be generous enough to break this engagement herself, and to insist on my lodging at her house. "You, madame," said she, "are surrounded

by every species of happiness ; and I have none now but that which I can find in the constant and intimate society of a true friend. For pity's sake, do not deprive me of it."

Madame de Séran was moved by her solicitation. She suspected me of having giving my consent to it ; I assured her that I had not. Indeed, the lodging which she had prepared for me, conveniently situated as it was, would have been more agreeable ; I should have been more at liberty, and at three steps only from the Academy. This proximity alone would have been of inestimable value to me in wintry weather, when I should have the bridge to cross if I lodged at Mademoiselle Clairon's. I had therefore no difficulty in persuading Madame de Séran that in every respect it was a sacrifice that was required of me. " Well," said she, " you must make this sacrifice : Mademoiselle Clairon has claims on you that I have not."

I went then to live in the house of my old friend ; and from the first day I perceived, that, with the exception of a little chamber backward, my apartment was wholly improper for a studious man, on account of the intolerable noise of the carriages and carts going over the bridge close to my ear. It is the great thoroughfare for the stone and wood that are brought to Paris. Thus day and night, without intermission, the grinding of the pavement of a deep ascent under the wheels of these carts, and under the feet of the unhappy horses that with difficulty draw them up the ascent, the hoarse cries of the carters, and the piercing cracks of their whips, realized what Virgil says of Tartarus : —

" Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare  
Verbera : hinc stridor ferri, tractæque catenæ."

But, however afflicting this inconvenience was to me, I took no notice of it to my fair neighbor; and, were it possible to be recompensed by the charms of the most engaging and best chosen society, I was so the whole time that she and I inhabited that house.

She often received visits from the Duchess de Villeroy, the daughter of the Duke d'Aumont, who, while her father persecuted me, had shown the liveliest regret at seeing him unjust, and herself unable to soften him.

One evening, when she had just quitted my fair neighbor, I was surprised to hear the latter say to me: "Well, Marmontel, you would never tell me who was the author of the parody of 'Cinna': I know it at last"; and she named Cury. (At that time Cury, his mother, and his son were dead.) "And who told it you?" I asked with surprise. "A person who very well knows; the Duchess de Villeroy. She has just left me, and you have been the object of her visit. Her father requests to see you." "Me! her father! the Duke d'Aumont!" "He wishes to consult you on the plays to be represented before the court on the marriage of the dauphin. 'But my father,' said she, 'would wish that Marmontel should not allude to the past.' 'Assuredly,' answered I, 'Marmontel will not mention it to him: but has your father nothing to say on the regret he must feel at having been so cruelly unjust to him? For I can answer for it he was most truly so.' 'I know it very well,' said she, 'and my father knows it too. The parody of 'Cinna' was Cury's, — La Ferté has told us so; he had heard the author read it; but, so long as that unhappy man lived, he would not betray him.'"

I was obliged to acknowledge the truth of what La

Ferté had said ; and, curious to see what countenance this man, condemned by his own conscience, would assume in my presence, I accepted the interview, and went to his house.

I found him with that same La Ferté, intendant of the *Menus Plaisirs*, examining on a table the plan of a fire-work. As soon as he saw me enter, he dismissed La Ferté ; and with a vivacity that disguised his disorder he conducted me into his chamber. Then with a trembling hand he advances a chair, and with a hasty officious air invites me to sit down. The Duchess de Villeroy had told Mademoiselle Clairon that for the fêtes of the court her father was " very much embarrassed." These words recurred to me ; and to induce conversation, " Well, my Lord Duke," said I, " are you so much embarrassed ? " At this beginning I saw him turn pale ; but I opportunely added, — " for the plays to be performed before the court " ; and he recovered from the painful oppression that my first equivocal words had caused. " Yes," said he, " very much embarrassed ; and I should be obliged to you if you would aid me to conquer this difficulty." He prated a vast deal on the pain and anxiety of such a commission ; we looked over the repertories of the theatres ; he appeared pleased with my hints, and finished by asking me if, among my manuscripts, I had not some new work of my own. He had heard of " Zémire and Azor " ; he begged me to read it to him ; I consented, but to him alone. This was the object of a second tête-à-tête ; but as his erudition extended as far as the Fairy Tales, having recognized in my subject that of Beauty and the Beast, " It is impossible for me," said he, " to give this piece on the marriage of the dauphin : it will be taken for a satiro." It was



he who had made it, and I kept his satire secret. What is remarkable in our two conversations is, that his vain and feeble mind had not the courage to express any regret for the injustice he had done me, or the most distant desire of seizing some opportunity to repair it.

At that time the Prince Royal of Sweden made a journey to Paris; he had already expressed a strong attachment for the author of "*Belisarius*," and had been pleased to correspond with me. He requested that he might see me often and in private. I paid my court to him; and when he learned the death of the king his father, I was the only foreigner he received during the first moments of his grief. I can say that I have seen in him the rare example of a young man wise enough to be sincerely and deeply afflicted at being a king. "What a misfortune," said he, "to find myself, at my age, burdened with a crown, and with an immense duty that I feel myself incapable of fulfilling! I was travelling to acquire the knowledge I wanted, and my travels are suddenly interrupted; I am obliged to return without having had time to inform my mind, or to see and study mankind; and with them, all intimate intercourse, all faithful and secure correspondence, is henceforth denied me. I must bid an eternal farewell to truth and friendship." "No, sire," answered I; "truth only flies from kings who reject and will not hear it. You love it, it will follow you; the sensibility of your heart, the frankness of your character, render you worthy of friendship: you will always have friends." "Men scarcely ever have any; kings never," replied he. "Here is one," said I, showing him the Count de Creutz, who was reading some despatches in a corner of the room, "who will never prove faithless."

"Yes, he is one," answered he, "and I depend on him; but he will not be with me; my affairs oblige me to leave him here." This little dialogue gives some idea of my conversations with this young prince, with whom I was every day more charmed. After having heard some readings of "The Incas," he requested of me, through his minister, a manuscript copy of it; and afterwards, when the work was printed, he permitted me to dedicate it to him.

In that same year I made a very pleasant visit to Croix Fontaine, but which ended by being a very unfortunate one. A malignant, putrid fever raged all along that side of the Seine. At St. Port and Ste. Assise many persons had died of it; and at Croix Fontaine a great number of servants were attacked. Those who had not caught it waited on their comrades: mine did not spare himself in the service; and I myself used to go very often and visit the sick, — an act of humanity vainly bestowed. However, I believed myself still in perfect health, when I received a letter from Paris desiring my attendance at the Academy for the reception of the Archbishop of Toulouse, an assembly that the King of Sweden was to honor with his presence.

The day after my arrival at Paris I felt myself as it were exhausted; yet I went to the assembly of the Academy; I even read there some detached parts of my work of "The Incas," but in a half-suffocated voice without expression and without energy. I had some success; but my friends perceived with concern that I was very faint and feeble. In the evening the fever seized me. My servant was attacked at the same time, and we were both forty days between life and death. It was the first illness of which Bouvart cured me. He paid me all the attention of a tender friend. And

Mademoiselle Clairon, during my recovery, gratified me by the most affecting attention : she used to read to me, and the reveries of the Thousand and One Nights were all that my feeble brain could endure.

Shortly afterwards the Academy lost Duclos ; and, on his death, the place of historiographer of France was given me without any solicitation on my part.

This mark of favor, the motive of which was unknown, silenced my enemies at court ; and the Duke de Duras, who had not the same scruple about " Beauty and the Beast " that the Duke d'Aumont had expressed, requested me, in 1771, to give " Zémire and Azor " to the theatre at Fontainebleau.

When " Zémire and Azor " was announced at Fontainebleau, the current report was, that I had introduced on the stage the story of " Beauty and the Beast," and that the principal character would enter on all fours. I quietly suffered the public to talk. I had written copious instructions for the dresses and decorations : but neither the tailor nor the decorator had given themselves the trouble to read what I had written ; and all their preparations were made after the story of " Beauty and the Beast." My friends were uneasy concerning the success of my piece ; Grétry looked disconsolate ; Clairval himself, who had so readily played all my other parts, expressed some repugnance at the idea of playing this. I asked him the reason. " How can you expect," said he, " that I should render interesting a character in which I shall be hideous ! " " Hideous ! " answered I. " You will not be at all so. You will be frightful at first sight ; but in your ugliness you will have dignity and even grace." " Go, then," said he, " and look at the beast-like dress they are preparing for me ; for I am told it is horrible." The piece was

to be played the next day ; there was not a moment to lose. I asked to see the dress of Azor. I had great difficulty in obtaining permission from the tailor. He bade me be easy, and rely on him. But I insisted ; and the Duke de Duras, ordering him to conduct me to the working-room, had the kindness to accompany me. "Show," said the tailor disdainfully to his workmen, "show the gentlemen the dress of the beast." What did I see ? A close dress for the whole body, exactly like the skin of a monkey, with a long bare tail, a bald back, enormous claws to the four paws, two long horns to the cowl, and a mask of disgusting deformity, with boar's teeth ! I was thunderstruck, and protested that my piece should not be played in this ridiculous and monstrous disguise. "What could you have wished ?" said the tailor, with an impertinent air. "I could have wished," answered I, "that you had read the instructions I wrote : you would have seen that I desired to have the dress of a man, and not of a monkey." "The dress of a man for a beast ?" "And who has told you that Azor is a beast ?" "The story tells me so." "The story is not my work ; and my work shall not be represented till all this be changed." "It is too late now." "Then I will go and petition the king to consent that this hideous spectacle may not be represented ; and I will give my reason." My man then became more tame, and asked me what he should make. "The simplest thing in the world," answered I ; "a spotted pantaloon, shoes and gloves of the same, a doliman of purple satin, with black flowing hair, picturesquely scattered, a frightful mask, but not deformed, nor like a snout." There was great difficulty in finding all this, for the store-room was empty ; but by dint of obstinacy I made myself obeyed ; and for the mask, I

formed it myself, of pieces cut out of several others and then joined together.

The next morning I made Clairval try this dress ; and, on looking at himself in his glass, he found it noble and imposing. " Now, my friend," said I, " your success depends upon the manner in which you shall enter on the stage. If you appear confused, timid, embarrassed, we are ruined. But if you present yourself boldly, with assurance, and a firm expressive action, you will command respect ; and this danger once past, I will answer for the rest."

I found the decorator guilty of the same negligence with which this impertinent tailor had served me ; and the magic picture, the most interesting incident of the piece, must have failed, if I had not done what his awkwardness would have spoiled. With two ells of silver mohair, to imitate a pier looking-glass, and two ells of clear and transparent gauze, I taught him to produce one of the most agreeable of theatrical illusions.

It was thus that, by my assiduity, instead of the disgrace with which I was threatened, I obtained the most brilliant success. Clairval played his part as I desired. The bold and firm step with which he entered produced that impression of astonishment which I expected, and from that instant I was at ease. I was in a corner of the orchestra, and had behind me a row of the court ladies. When Azor, on his knees at the feet of Zénire, sang to her,

" From the moment we love we are gentle and mild ;  
Like you too I tremble, for love is a child " :

I heard these ladies say to each other, " He's now no longer ugly " ; and added, the moment afterwards, " He is handsome !"

My ode in praise of Voltaire is nearly of this date. What gave birth to it was this: the society of Mademoiselle Clairon was more than ever numerous and brilliant. The conversation was animated, particularly when poetry was its subject; and the man of letters had opportunities of conversing with men of the world of exquisite taste and highly cultivated minds. It was in one of these conversations that, in speaking of lyric poetry, I said that the ode could not possess in France that character for truth and dignity which it obtained in Greece, because poets had no longer the same ministry to fulfil; that the bards alone, among the Gauls, had shown this grand character, because they were, by profession, engaged to celebrate the glory of heroes.

"And in our days," asked they, "what prevents the poet from assuming this ancient character, and consecrating himself to this public ministry?" I answered, that if there were, as formerly, fêtes, solemnities, where the poet was heard, the pomp of these grand exhibitions would elevate his soul and genius. For an example, I supposed the apotheosis of Voltaire, and on a vast theatre, at the foot of his statue, Mademoiselle Clairon reciting verses in praise of that illustrious man. "Can you think," asked I, "that the ode destined for this solemn eulogy would not assume in its spirit, and in the mind of the poet, a truer and more animated tone than that which he should coldly compose in his cabinet?" I saw that this idea made its impression, and Mademoiselle Clairon above all appeared forcibly struck. Hence I conceived the project of writing, as an essay, that ode which you will find in the collection of my poems.

In reading it, Mademoiselle Clairon felt that her talent could supply in it what mine could not effect, and

was once more pleased to lend my verses the charm of that illusion which she so well knew how to inspire.

One evening, then, when the company were assembled in her drawing-room, and had sent word that they were expecting her, and as we were talking of Voltaire, a curtain suddenly rises; and by the side of the bust of that great man Mademoiselle Clairon, dressed as a priestess of Apollo, with a crown of laurel in her hand, begins to recite my ode with the air of inspiration and in the tone of enthusiasm. This little fête had afterwards the merit of giving birth to one more solemn, and at which Voltaire was present.

Shortly afterwards the Count de Valbelle, Mademoiselle Clairon's lover, enriched by the death of his elder brother, being gone to enjoy his fortune in the city of Aix, in Provence, and the Prince of Auspach having fallen in love with the princess of the stage, she was obliged to take a more ample and more commodious house than that in which we lodged together. It was then that I went to occupy, at the Countess de Séran's, the apartment which she had kept for me, and it was there that M. Odde came and passed a year with me.

I could have wished to retire with him to Bort; and for that purpose I had thought of purchasing a little land a short distance from the town, where I should have built myself a cot. Fortunately, this land was valued at so exorbitant a price that I could not make the purchase, and the project was renounced. I still continued, then, to indulge in the society of Paris, and particularly in that of the ladies, but resolved to refrain from every connection that might disturb my repose.

I paid my court to the Countess de Séran as assiduously as I could do without being importunate. She

had the kindness to express a wish that I would go and pass the spring with her in Normandy, at her little country seat of La Tour, which she was ornamenting. I accompanied her thither. What would I not have quitted for her? All the charm that the friendship of woman and her most intimate converse can have, without love, was offered me with her. Had it been possible to be in love without hope, I certainly should have been so with Madame de Séran; but she so distinctly and so ingenuously marked to me the boundary of her sentiments for me, and of those I might indulge for her, that even my wishes never went beyond them.

I was likewise united in pure and simple friendship with women who, on the decline of life, had not ceased to be engaging, and of whom Fontenelle would have said, "You may easily see that love has been there." I had not for them that veneration which is reserved only for virtue; but they inspired me with a sentiment of benevolence that was scarcely less attaching, and which flattered them more. It touched me to see decaying beauty sadden before its mirror, to find its charms had faded. She who, of all my friends, was most afflicted at this irreparable loss, was Madame de L. P——. She reminded me in her melancholy of these words of a celebrated Grecian beauty, suspending her looking-glass in the temple of her divinity: —

“To Venus this offering, for she’s ever fair;

It only redoubles my pain:

The face it now shows me augments my despair;

It forgets what I could not retain.”

The most feeling, the most delicate, the most affectionate of hearts was that of Madame de L. P——. Without pretending to indemnify her for the ravages of



time, I sought to console her for them by all the attentions of a rational and tender friend; and, like a docile patient, she accepted all the comforts that my reason offered her. She had even anticipated my counsels in attempting to divert her weariness by cultivating a taste for study, and this taste charmed our leisure. In the early splendor of her beauty, no one suspected with how much nature had endowed her. She was ignorant of it herself. Wholly occupied by her other charms, dreaming only of her pleasures, her voluptuousness and her indolence left, as it were, asleep at the bottom of her heart a crowd of delicate, subtile, and accurate perceptions, which had crept there without her knowledge, and which in the sad leisure hour she now had left for recalling them seemed to disclose themselves in abundance, and without exertion. I used to observe them in our conversations awake and expand with infinite grace and ease. Her complaisance induced her to follow me in my studies and labors; she aided me in my researches; but, while her mind was occupied, her heart was vacant: that was her torment. All her sensibility inclined to our mutual friendship; and, confined within the limits of the only sentiments that accorded with her age and mine, it became still more acute. Whether at Paris or in the country, I was as assiduous as possible in my attentions to her. I even very often quitted for her societies in which my taste would have been more gratified, and I did for friendship what I have very rarely done for love. But no person on earth loved me so tenderly as Madame de L. P——; and when I had said to myself, "All the rest of the world are happy though I am absent," I no longer hesitated to abandon all for her. My philosophical and literary societies were the only ones of

which she was not jealous ; by every other diversion I afflicted her ; and the more gentle, timid, and discreet her reproach, the more nearly did it touch me.

At that time my occupations were divided between history and the Encyclopædia. I made it a point of honor strictly to fulfil my functions of historiographer, by carefully writing some memoirs for future historians. I addressed myself to the most distinguished men of that time, in order to draw from them some information relative to the reign of Louis XV., where I intended to begin ; and I was myself astonished at the confidence they showed me. The Count de Maillebois gave me all his father's papers and his own. The Marquis de Castires gave me free access to his cabinet, which contained the memoirs of Marshal de Belleisle ; the Count de Broglio initiated me in the mysteries of his secret negotiations ; Marshal de Contades traced to me with his own hand the plan of his campaign, and the disaster of Minden.

The death of the king had just produced a considerable change at court, in the ministry, and, singularly, in the fortune of my friends.

M. Bouret had ruined himself by building and decorating the pavilion of Croix Fontaine, for the king ; and the king thought he paid him enough for it by honoring it, once a year, with his presence on one of his hunting parties ; an honor which was likewise very expensive to this unfortunate man, who was obliged, on that day, to give the whole hunt a dinner, for which nothing was spared.

I had more than once lamented his profusion ; but the most liberal, the most improvident of men had the fault of never listening to the counsels of his true friends when they touched upon his extravagance. However,

he had completely exhausted his credit by building five or six houses in the Champs Elysées, at a great expense, when the king died, without having even thought of saving him from ruin; and this death leaving him overwhelmed with debt, destitute of resource, and without hope, he resolved, I believe, to rid himself of life: he was found dead in his bed. Unfortunately for himself, he was incautious even to infatuation: he was never dishonest.

Madame de Séran was more prudent. Having no longer, at the death of the king, any prospect of favor and protection, either for herself or her children, she made a more solid use of the only benefit she had accepted; and the new director of the royal buildings, Count d'Angiviller, having proposed to purchase her hotel for himself at a fair price, she consented to it. Thus, in 1776, we were both obliged to remove, three years after she had granted me that welcome hospitality.

The accession of the new king to the crown was followed by his coronation in the cathedral at Rheims.

In my quality of historiographer of France, I was ordered to be present at this august ceremony. I will not here repeat what I have said respecting it in a letter that was printed without my knowledge, and which I have since inserted in the collection of my works. It is a feeble picture of the effect which this grand solemnity produced on fifty thousand spectators who were there assembled. With respect to my own personal feelings, nothing ever affected me more powerfully.

Besides, I had in this journey all the advantages that my place could procure; and I thought I owed them to the honorable manner with which Marshal Beauveau, captain of the guards on duty and my

brother member at the French Academy, had the kindness to treat me.

Of all the women I have known, the one whose politeness has most simplicity and charm is Madame de Beauveau. She, as well as her husband, showed a delicate and marked attention, to give the example of respect which they wished other people to pay me, and this example was followed. Feeling intimately the testimonies of their kindness, I have since cultivated it with care. The character of the marshal was not so engaging as that of his wife. Yet that cold dignity, which has been attributed to him as a reproach, never subjected me to the smallest constraint. I was persuaded that in every other situation, his air, his manners, his tone, would have been the same; and, in adapting myself to what seemed to me to be his native disposition, I found him civil, kind-hearted, obliging, and without vanity, even eager to serve. As for his wife, now his widow, I do not believe that there is under heaven a character more lovely or more accomplished than hers. Indeed, she may justly, and without irony, be called the woman who is always right. But the accuracy, the precision, the invariable transparency of her understanding, is accompanied with so much gentleness, simplicity, modesty, and grace, that she makes us love the superiority she exerts over us. She seems to communicate her whole soul to us, associate our ideas with hers, and to make us participate in the advantage she always has of thinking so justly and so well. Her great art, as well as her most continual care, was to honor her husband, to represent him in the fairest colors, to withdraw herself in order to put him in her place, and to yield to him the interest, the consideration, and the respect which she attracted. She would

say that all which was praised in her should be referred to M. de Beauveau. Observe, my dear children, that she lost nothing by this conjugal devotion, that it even honored her, and that the reflected lustre she lent to the character of her husband did but give to her own more relief and brilliancy. No woman ever felt more forcibly the dignity of her duties as a wife, nor ever fulfilled them with more nobleness.

My letter on the ceremony of the coronation, published and distributed at court by the intendant of Champagne, had there produced the effect of a picture which retraced to the eyes of the king and queen a day of glory and happiness. It was, for me, the dawning of favor. The queen soon afterwards showed me some kindness. In her own apartments, on a little stage, she wished to have represented "Sylvain" and "L'Ami de la Maison." This little performance gave great satisfaction; and, passing me, the queen said with the loveliest air, "Marinontel, that is charming." But this prospect was soon clouded by the part I took in favor of Italian music.

Under the late king, the Neapolitan ambassador had persuaded the court to procure from Italy a good composer, in order to regenerate the French opera, which had long been on the brink of ruin, and was supported with difficulty at the expense of the public treasury. The new mistress, Madame Dubarry, had adopted this idea, and our ambassador at the court of Naples, the Baron de Breteuil, had been commissioned to engage Piccini to come and establish himself in France, upon an annual salary of two hundred and fifty pounds, on condition of giving us French operas.

He had scarcely arrived, when my friend the Neapolitan ambassador, the Marquis de Caraccioli, came

to recommend him to me, and to request I would write for him a tragic opera, such as I had written for Grétry at the comic opera-house.

At that time the composer Gluck had lately arrived from Germany, as strongly recommended to the young queen, by her brother the Emperor Joseph, as if the success of German music had had the importance of business of state. A French opera of "*Iphigénie en Aulide*" had been composed at Vienna, on the plan of a ballet, by Novère. Gluck had written the music for it; and this opera, by which he had made his *début* in France, had met with the greatest success. The young queen had declared in favor of Gluck; and Piccini, who, on his arrival, found him established in the public opinion, in town and at court, not only had no one for him, but at court he had against him the odious title of composer under protection of the late king's mistress; and in town he had for enemies all the French composers, who found it more easy to imitate the German music than the Italian, the style and accent of which they despaired of acquiring.

If I had had a little policy, I should have ranged myself on the favorite side. But the music that was patronized no more resembled, in its Teutonic forms, that which I had heard of Pergolese, of Leo, of Buranello, etc., than the style of Crébillon resembles that of Racine; and to prefer the Crébillon to the Racine of music would have been an effort of dissimulation that I could not have borne.

Besides, I had conceived a project of introducing Italian music on our two theatres; and you have seen that in comic operas I had begun with some success. It is not that Grétry's music had all the charm of the best music of the Italians, it was still far from attain-

ing the whole which enchants us in the works of the great composers. But he had an easy melody, simplicity of expression, airs and duets agreeably arranged; sometimes, even in the orchestra, pleasing accompaniments; with taste too, and understanding enough to supply what he wanted on the side of science and genius; and if his music had not all the witchery and richness of that of Piccini, of Sacchini, of Paesello, it had its rhythm, its accent, its prosody; I had shown then that, at least in comedy, the French language might have a music of the same style as Italian music.

It remained for me to make the same trial in tragedy, and accident now offered me an opportunity of doing so. The problem was more difficult to solve, but for other reasons than those which had been imagined.

Dignified language is less favorable to music, first, because it has no inflections so lively, so accented, so docile to song, as the language of comedy: secondly, because it has less range, less abundance, and less liberty in the choice of expression. But a much greater difficulty to me arose from the idea I had conceived of a lyric poem, and of the theatrical form I had wished to give it. I had made with Grétry the perilous attempt in the opera of "*Céphale et Procris*." In dividing the action into three pictures, — one, voluptuous and brilliant, the palace of Aurora, her waking, her loves, the pleasures of her celestial court; another, dark and fearful, the plot of jealousy, and its poison poured into the heart of Procris; the third, touching, passionate, tragic, the error of *Céphale*, and the death of his wife, pierced with his darts, and expiring in his arms, — I fancied I had realized the idea of an interesting theatrical exhibition: but, not having succeeded in this first trial, and attributing to myself a part of

our misfortune, my distrust of my own powers extended even to alarm.

The sentiment of my own weakness, and the good opinion I entertained of the celebrated composer with whom I was honored, in Piccini, made me conceive the idea of taking the beautiful operas of Quinault, to prune them of their episodes and superfluous details; to reduce them to their real beauties; to add to them airs, duets, monologues in recitative, chorusses in dialogue and in contrast; to accommodate them thus to Italian music; to form of them a kind of lyric poem more varied, more animated, more simple, less unconnected in its action, and infinitely more rapid than the Italian opera.

Metastasio himself, whom I studied, and whom I admired as a model in the art of designing his verses for song, often appeared to me insupportably tedious, and void of continuity. Those double intrigues, those episodic amours, those detached scenes so multiplied, those airs almost always lost, as has been said, like vignettes at the end of the scenes, all disgusted me. I wanted a full action, rapid and closely connected; in which the situations, linked to each other, were themselves the object and the motive of the air; so that the air should only be the more lively expression of the feelings of the scene, and that the airs, the duets, the chorusses, should be interwoven with the recitatives. I wanted, besides, that, in giving itself these advantages, the French opera should preserve its pomp, its prodigies, its solemnities, its illusion, and that, enriched with all the beauties of Italian music, it should still be that spectacle, —

“ Where verse, the dance, sweet music’s varied tone,  
The art to cheat the eye with colors, the power



To captivate, seduce, and win the heart,  
Blending a thousand witching charms in one."

VOLTAIRE.

It was in this spirit that the opera of "Roland" was recomposed. As soon as I had reduced this poem to the state I wished, I felt as delighted as if I had written it myself. I saw the work of Quinault in its plain and simple beauty; I saw the idea which I had conceived of a French lyric poem realized, or on the point of being so, by a skilful composer. This composer did not know a word of French; I undertook to be his master. "When," said he in Italian, "shall we be able to begin this work?" "To-morrow morning," I replied; and the next day I went to his lodgings.

Figure to yourselves what labor I had in instructing him: verse by verse, almost word by word, it was requisite to explain all to him: and when he had mastered the sense of a passage, I declaimed it to him, marking very accurately the accent, the prosody, the cadence of the verses, the pauses, the half-pauses, and the articulations of the phrase; he listened to me with eager attention, and I had the pleasure of perceiving that what he had heard was faithfully noted in his memory. The accent and the number of the language struck so correctly on his excellent ear, that in his music, neither the one nor the other ever was — or scarcely ever — altered. His sensibility in seizing the most delicate inflections of the voice was so acute that he could express even the finest shades of feeling.

It was to me an inexpressible pleasure to see exercising under my own eyes an art, or rather a genius, of which till then I had no idea. His harmony was in his head. His orchestra and all the effects it should produce were present with him. He wrote his song

without hesitation, and when the design of it was traced he filled all the parts of the instruments or the voice, distributing touches of melody and harmony, as a skilful painter would have distributed colors and shades on his canvas to compose his picture. This labor completed, he opened his harpsichord, which till then had served him for a table ; and I heard an air, a duet, a chorus, complete in all its parts, with a truth of expression, an intelligence, a whole, a magic combination, that enchanted the ear and mind.

There it was that I recognized the man I sought, the man who possessed his science, and governed it at his will ; and thus the music of " Roland " was composed, which, in spite of cabal, had the most glorious success.

In the mean time, and in proportion as the work advanced, the zealous amateurs of good music, at the head of whom were the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, rallied round the harpsichord of Piccini, to hear every day some new scene ; and every day these entertainments recompensed my trouble. Among these amateurs of music were the two Morellets, my personal friends, and the most active friends Piccini had formed in France. It was by them that, on his arrival, he had been received, welcomed, lodged, and provided with the first necessities of life. They spared nothing to serve and gratify him ; and their house was his. I loved to think that our being thus associated was an additional motive to the interest they took in him ; and between them and myself this object of common affection was a new aliment of friendship.

The Abbé Morellet and I had for twenty years frequented the same societies, often opposed in opinion, always agreeing in sentiment and in principles, and full of esteem for each other. In our most animated dis-

putes no trait of bitterness or severity ever intruded. Without flattering, we loved each other.

His brother, who had lately arrived from Italy, was quite a new friend ; but he had won my heart by his integrity and frankness. They lived together ; and their sister, the widow of M. Leyrin de Montigny, was coming from Lyons, with her young daughter, to grace their society.

The abbé, who had informed me of the happiness that awaited them, of being thus united in one family, wrote me, one day, the following note : “ My dear friend, to-morrow our ladies arrive ; pray come and aid us to welcome them.”

My destiny will now assume a new face ; and it is from this note that I date the virtuous and unalterable happiness that awaited me in my age, and which I have enjoyed for twenty years.

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## BOOK X.

So long as Heaven had left me, in Madame Odde, a sister tenderly dear, and whose love for me was rather filial than fraternal, secure of having in her worthy and virtuous husband a true friend, whose house would be mine, whose children would be mine, I knew where I could pass my age in peace. The esteem and confidence that Odde had acquired, and the excellent reputation he enjoyed in his profession, rendered his advancement facile and secure ; and, had he only preserved the employment that he held at Saumur, my little fortune, added to his, would have procured us an honorable

sufficiency. Thus, when the world and I should have been weary of each other, my age had a calm and grateful retreat. In this happy confidence, I glided gently down the stream of life, and without solicitude saw myself on my decline.

But when I had lost my sister and her children, when, in his affliction, Odde, abandoning a town where he saw only their tombs, and, resigning his place, had retired to his native province, my prospect of future comfort, till then so serene, suddenly darkened; I saw nothing left but the dangers of marriage, or the solitude of sad celibacy and neglected old age.

In marriage, I dreaded the domestic vexations that it would have been impossible for me to endure and live, and of which I saw a thousand examples. But a misfortune still more dreadful was that of an old man, obliged either to bear the buffets of the world, while he drags out a wearisome and lingering decay, or to remain alone, deserted, at the mercy of his servants, a prey to their rude insolence and servile dominion. In this painful situation I had more than once attempted to find myself a companion, and to adopt a family that should supply the place of that which death had torn from me. But, by a happy fatality, no one of my projects had succeeded, when I saw arrive at Paris the sister and the niece of my friends the two Morellets. It was a gift from Heaven.

At the same time, amiable as they both appeared to me, the mother by a character of frankness, cordiality, and kindness, the daughter by an air of candor and modesty, that, united to beauty, added to its lustre, and both by a language in which I easily perceived as much wit as good sense, I did not imagine that I, who was more than fifty, could be a suitable husband for a

girl who was scarcely eighteen. Her dazzling qualities, her bloom of youth, her brilliancy of beauty, with charms that nature had yet scarcely disclosed, were what necessarily suppressed my hope, and with hope the desire of possessing her.

In this agreeable adventure, then, I saw nothing for me but a new and charming society.

Whether it be that Madame de Montigny was pre-disposed in my favor, or that my good-nature pleased her at first sight, she assumed the tone of an old friend, whom she had met once more, though I was but the friend of her brothers. We supped together. The joy they all felt at meeting animated the repast. I shared this joy as if I too had been their brother. I was invited to dinner for the next day, and by degrees we contracted the habit of seeing each other every day.

The more I conversed with the mother and listened to the daughter, the more I discovered in both that engaging natural manner which has always charmed me. But, again, my age and the slenderness of my fortune did not allow me to anticipate any prospect of that happiness for myself which I foretold for the husband of Mademoiselle de Montigny; and more than two months had elapsed before the idea occurred to me of aspiring to that happiness.

One morning a friend of mine, who was also one of the friends of the Morellets, the Abbé Maury, called on me, and said, "Shall I tell you a piece of news? Mademoiselle de Montigny is going to be married." "Married! to whom?" "To you." "To me!" "Yes, to you yourself." "You are mad, or you are dreaming." "I do not dream, and it is no madness; it is a very sensible thing, and none of your friends

doubt it." "Hear me," said I, "and believe me, for I am serious. Mademoiselle de Montigny is a charming girl; I think her accomplished; and for this reason I never entertained the extravagant idea of pretending to be her husband." "Well, you will be so, without having pretended." "At my age!" "Ay, at your age. You are still young, and in full health." And there he was, displaying all his eloquence to prove to me that nothing was more suitable; that I should be loved; that we should make a happy couple; and in a prophetic tone he predicted that we should have charming children.

After this sally he left me to indulge my reflections; and, while I pronounced him to be mad, I began to be scarcely more sane myself. To be fifty-four no longer appeared to me so dreadful an obstacle; health, at that age, might supply the place of youth. I began to think that I might inspire, not love, but a kind and tender friendship; and I recollected what sages had said, that friendship makes more happy couples than love.

I thought I had remarked in this young and beautiful girl some pleasure in seeing me, and some in hearing me; her fine eyes, when fixed on me, had a character of interest and benevolence. I even went so far as to fancy that in the attentions with which her mother honored me, in the pleasure that her uncle showed at the frequency of my visits, there was, perhaps, some disposition favorable to the wish I dared not entertain. I was not rich; but five thousand guineas, securely invested, were the fruit of my savings. In fine, since a sincere friend, the Abbé Maury, thought this union not only rational but desirable on both sides, why should I myself think it so injudicious a match?

I was engaged that day to dine at Morellet's. I went there with an emotion that was new to me. I think, too, I recollect having dressed myself rather more smartly than usual; and from that instant my attention was seriously fixed on what began to interest me very powerfully. Not a word was neglected, not a look escaped me: I delicately made imperceptible advances, and slight attempts on their minds and hearts. The abbé seemed to pay no attention to them; but his sister, his brother, and his niece, appeared to me very sensible to all that came from me.

About this time the abbé made a journey to Brienne, in Champagne, to see the unfortunate Loménie, with whom he had been intimate from his youth; and in his absence the party became more familiar and more closely united.

I well knew that flattering appearances might render the attraction of a first union deceitful; I knew what illusion grace joined with beauty could create: two or three months of acquaintance and social intimacy could scarcely suffice to assure myself of the disposition of a young girl. I had seen more than one in the world who had been taught only to feign and dissemble; but I had heard so much in praise of the simplicity of Mademoiselle de Montigny, and this simplicity appeared to me so unaffected, so pure, and so true, so far removed from every species of dissimulation, of feint, and of artifice, while kindness of heart, innocence, and tender modesty were so visibly expressed in her air and language, that I felt myself irresistibly inclined to believe all I was told of her; and, if I did not give credit to so much semblance of truth, I must renounce all confidence, and believe nothing.

A walk in the gardens at Sceaux ripened my decis-

ion. Never did this place appear to me so beautiful; never had I breathed the air of the country with so much delight; the presence of Mademoiselle de Montigny had embellished all: her looks diffused an enchantment around her. What I felt was not that delirium of the senses which is called love; it was a calm enjoyment, such as that of pure spirits is described. Shall I confess it? It seemed to me, then, that for the first time I recognized the true sentiment of love.

Till then, sensual pleasure had been the only charm that had guided me. Here I found myself enchanted by more invincible spells; they were candor, innocence, sweet sensibility, chaste and timid bashfulness, a modesty whose veil adorned grace and beauty; it was virtue crowned with the flowers of youth that ravished my soul still more than my eyes; a kind of sorcery infinitely superior to those of the *Armidas* that I once thought I saw in the gay world.

My emotion was the more lively because it was suppressed. . . . I longed to make an avowal of it; but to whom? and how would it be received? The good mother gave me an opportunity. In the alley where we were walking, she was at three steps from us with her brother. "What confidence," said she, smiling, "must I have in you, to suffer you to talk thus with my daughter, tête-à-tête!" "Madame," answered I, "it is right that I should return that confidence by telling you what was the subject of our conversation. Mademoiselle was picturing to me the happiness you enjoy, by being all four united in one family; and I, who felt envious of this happiness, was going to ask you if a fifth, one like myself, for example, would spoil the society." "I should think not," she replied; "but ask my brother." "I," said the brother frankly,



“should be highly pleased with it.” “And you, mademoiselle?” “I,” said she, “I hope that my uncle the abbé will think as my mother does; but, till his return, permit me to be silent.”

As we all concluded that his sentiments would coincide with our own, as my intention was now declared, and the mother, the daughter, and the uncle had consented, I no longer dissembled. I even thought I perceived that a sentiment which occupied *my* mind incessantly found some access to her heart, who was its object.

The abbé made us wait for him; at last he arrived: and, though all had been settled without his consent, he gave it. The next day the contract was signed. He made his niece his heiress after his death and that of his sister; and I, in this deed, drawn up and written by their attorney, was only anxious to render, at my decease, my wife happy, and independent of her children.

Never was a marriage celebrated under happier auspices. As the confidence between Mademoiselle de Montigny and myself was mutual and perfect, and as we had well persuaded each other that our feelings agreed intimately with the vow which we were about to make at the altar, we pronounced it without agitation or inquietude.

On our return from the church, where Chastellux and Thomas had held over us the nuptial veil, our friends were pleased to leave us for some moments alone; and these moments were employed in expressing mutually our earnest desire to render each other happy. This first effusion of two hearts, that sincerity on one side and innocence on the other, and the tenderest friendship on both, unites forever, is perhaps the most delicious moment in life.

The dinner, after the toilet, was animated by the gayety of the good old times. The guests were D'Alembert, Chastellux, Thomas, St. Lambert, a cousin of the Morellets, and some other common friends. All were occupied with the bride; and, like me, all were so charmed with her, and so jovial, that to see them you would have said that each was her bridegroom.

When we rose from table, we passed into a saloon, which was decorated by the rich library of the Abbé Morellet. A harpsichord and little desks announced music; but what new and bewitching music were we to hear! The opera of "Roland," the first French opera that had ever been set to Italian music; and to execute it, the finest voices and the most distinguished musicians of the opera-house!

The emotion that this novelty excited had all the charm of surprise. Piccini was at the harpsichord; he animated the orchestra and the singers with the fire of his genius. The Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors were present at this concert, and were delighted with it. Marshal Beauveau was likewise at the fête. This species of enchantment lasted till supper, to which the singers and instrumental performers were invited.

Thus passed this joyous day, the epoch and the presage of that happiness which has diffused itself over the remainder of my life, through the adversities that have often disturbed but have never impaired it.

It was agreed that we should live together, the two uncles, the mother, and ourselves, each paying a fifth part of the expenses of the house; and this plan suited me in every respect. It united the advantage of domestic fellowship to that of a society of friends, which we had only to enjoy.

I have made you acquainted with some of those whom we could call our friends ; but there are others, of whom I have much to speak, though cursorily, and on whom my memory delights to dwell.

You have a thousand times, my dear children, heard your mother say what pleasure we derived from the company of M. de St. Lambert and the Countess d'Houdetot, his friend ; and what was the charm of a society where wit, taste, the love of letters, all the most essential and most desirable qualities of the heart, attracted and attached us, now to the sage D'Eaubonne's, and now to the sweet retreat of La Seigné de Sanois. Never did two minds form a more perfect concord of sentiments and ideas. But they particularly resembled each other in an inviting eagerness to give a hearty welcome to their friends. It was a politeness at once free, easy, and attentive ; the politeness of an exquisite taste, which comes from the heart, which goes to the heart, and which only sensitive minds can know.

St. Lambert and I had been at the parties of Baron d'Holbach, of Helvetius, and of Madame Geoffrin ; we were as constantly at those of Madame Necker ; but in this I was his senior ; I was nearly its oldest member.

It was at a citizen's ball, a singular circumstance, that I became acquainted with Madame Necker ; then young, with some beauty, and a brilliant freshness, dancing ill, but with her whole soul.

She had scarcely heard my name, when she came to me with the genuine air of joy. "On arriving at Paris," said she, "one of my desires has been to know the author of the 'Moral Tales.' I did not expect so fortunate a meeting at this ball. I hope that it will not be a transient adventure. Necker," said she to her

husband, calling him, "come and second me in engaging M. Marmontel, the author of the 'Moral Tales,' to do us the honor of visiting us." M. Necker was very civil in his invitation, which I accepted. Thomas was the only literary man whom they had known before me. But shortly, in the beautiful hotel which they had taken, Madame Necker selected and composed her society, on the model of that of Madame Geoffrin.

A stranger to the manners of Paris, Madame Necker had none of the allurements of a young French woman. In her manners and language she had neither the air nor the tone of a woman educated in the school of art and formed in the school of the world. Without taste in her dress, without ease in her carriage, without attraction in her politeness; her understanding, like her countenance, was too formal to possess grace.

But a charm more worthy of her was decorum, candor, and kindness. A virtuous education and solitary studies had given her all that cultivation can add to an excellent disposition. Her sensibility was perfect; but her thoughts were often confused and vague. Meditation, instead of clearing her ideas, troubled them; by exaggerating, she thought she enlarged them; to extend them, she bewildered herself in abstractions or in hyperboles. She seemed to see certain objects only through a mist that magnified them to her eyes; and then her expressions were so inflated, that their energy would have been ludicrous had you not known that she was sincere.

In her, taste was less a result of feeling than of opinions, collected and transcribed into her pocket-book. Had she never quoted her authorities, it would have been easy to say on what, and after whom, her judgment had formed itself. In the art of writing, she es-

teemed only elevation, majesty, and pomp. Gradations, shades, the varieties of coloring and tone, touched her feebly. She had heard much in praise of the genuine simplicity of Lafontaine, and of the natural ease of Sevigné; she would talk of them from hearsay, while she felt them but little. The graces of negligence, ease, and the flow of soul were unknown to her. Even in conversation, familiarity displeased her. I often amused myself with seeing how far she carried this delicacy. One day I quoted to her some familiar expressions, which I said I thought might be received into the loftiest style: as, *faire l'amour*; *aller voir ses amours*; *commencer à voir clair*; *prenez votre parti*; *pour bien faire, il faudroit*; *non, vois-tu*; *faisons mieux*, etc. She rejected them as unworthy a dignified style. "Racine," said I, "was less difficult than you are. He has made use of them all"; and I showed her the examples. But her opinion, once established, was unalterable; and the authority of Thomas, or that of Buffon, was for her an article of faith.

You would have said that she reserved rectitude and accuracy for the rule of her duties. There, all was precise and severely measured; even the amusements in which she seemed desirous of indulging had their reason, their method.

You would see her wholly occupied with making herself agreeable to her society, eager to welcome those she had admitted to it, attentive to say to each what could most please him: but all this was premeditated; nothing flowed naturally, nothing created illusion.

It was not for us, it was not for herself, that she exerted all her cares; it was for her husband. To make

him acquainted with us, to win our favor for him, to have him spoken of with eulogy in the world, and to begin his renown, was the principal object of the foundation of her literary society. But it was requisite too that her drawing-room, and that her dinner, should be a recreation, a spectacle for her husband; for indeed he was there only a cold and silent spectator. Except a few smart words that he introduced here and there, he sat mute and inanimate, leaving to his wife the care of supporting the conversation. She did all she could; but her mind had none of those pretty graces that are the soul of the familiar dialogue of the table. Not a single sally, not one vivid touch, not one flash of gayety, that could awaken wit. Restless, troubled, as soon as she found the scene and the dialogue languish, she sought the cause of it in our eyes. Sometimes, even, she had the sincerity to complain of it to me. "How can it be otherwise, madame?" used I say to her: "wit is not always at our command, nor are we always in a humor to be engaging. M. Necker himself is perhaps not every day amusing."

The attentions of Madame Necker, and all her desire to please us, could not have conquered the disgust of being at her dinners for the sole purpose of entertaining her husband. But it was with these dinners as with many others, where the guests, enjoying themselves, dispense with wit and gayety in their host, provided he dispense with their attentions.

While Necker was minister, those who had known him in his private life have attributed his silence, his gravity, and his reserve, to the arrogance of his new situation. But I can attest that even before fortune had thus elevated him, while he was the simple partner of Thelluson the banker, he had the same air and

the same grave and silent character, and that he was neither more friendly nor more familiar. He received his company politely ; but he manifested none of that cordiality which, and which alone, gives to politeness the semblance of friendship.

His daughter has said of him, "that he had the art of keeping all men at a distance." If that were her father's motive of action, in disclosing it she betrayed, very inconsiderately, the secret of a ridiculous pride. But the simple truth was, that a man accustomed from his youth to the close, mysterious transactions of a bank, and buried in the calculations of commercial speculation, knowing nothing of the world, little conversant with men, and still less so with books, superficially and vaguely informed on all that did not concern his profession, — such a man was obliged, from discretion, prudence, and self-love, to keep himself reserved, in order that he might not discover his poverty : thus he would speak freely and fluently on every subject with which he was acquainted, but cautiously on every other. He was therefore adroit and prudent, not arrogant. His daughter is sometimes rash, though she is always charming.

With respect to Madame Necker, she had among us some friends whom she distinguished ; and I was always of this number. It was not that our opinions and tastes harmonized ; I even affected to oppose my simple and vulgar ideas to her high conceptions ; and it was requisite for her to descend from those inaccessible heights in order to communicate with me. But, though unapt to follow her in the region of her thoughts, and more a slave to my senses than she would have wished, I was not the less one of her favorites.

Her society had one very great attraction for me, that of meeting there the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, two men whose absence and whose loss I have much regretted. The one by his sincerity and cordiality, as much as by his taste and talents, rendered his converse every day more desirable to me. The other by his warm friendship, his mild philosophy, and by an, as it were, grateful odor of ingenuous and modest virtue, by a melancholy and affecting tone of language and character, attached me yet more intimately. I used to see them at my own house, at theirs, and at our friends' as often as possible, and never so often as I wished.

Happy in my social circles, still happier in my domestic enjoyments, I was expecting, eighteen months after my marriage, the birth of my first child, as an event that should crown all my wishes. Alas! how cruelly were my hopes deceived! this child, so ardently desired, died ere it saw the light. Its mother, astonished and frightened at not hearing its cries, asked to see it; and I, motionless and trembling, was still in the adjoining drawing-room, waiting her delivery, when my mother-in-law came and said to me, "Come and embrace your dear wife, and save her from despair; your child has died in its birth." I felt my heart pierced at these disastrous words. Pale and petrified, supporting myself with difficulty, I crept to the bed of my wife, and there, making an effort over myself, "my dear wife," said I, "this is the moment to prove that you really live for me: our child is no more, he died while you were suffering." The wretched mother uttered a cry that pierced my heart, and fell lifeless into my arms. As she will read these memoirs, let us pass over those cruel moments, that I may not again open a wound that bled too long.



At the birth of her second child she resolved to suckle it. I opposed this resolution : I thought her still too feeble. The nurse that we had chosen was apparently the best possible ; with an appearance of health and freshness, a good complexion, rosy lips, beautiful teeth, and a fine breast, she had everything but milk. That breast was marble ; the child wasted : it was at St. Cloud ; and, till its mother should be able to go and see it, the rector of the village had promised us to watch its progress : he indeed sent us news of it ; but he had the cruelty to mislead us.

On arriving at the nurse's, we were painfully undeceived. " My dear little boy is ill," said his mother to me ; " see how his hands are withered ! He looks at me with eyes that implore my pity. This woman must bring him to Paris, that my surgeon may see him." She came ; the surgeon was called in, and he found that she had no milk. He went instantly in search of another nurse ; and as soon as the child had taken this new breast, where he drew from a copious stream, he found its milk so good that he could not satisfy himself.

What was our joy to see him visibly recover, and gain new life, like a dried and dying plant that is watered ! This dear child was Albert ; and we seemed to have a sweet presentiment of the consolations he now affords.

My wife, in order to keep the nurse with her, and give a pure air to the child, was desirous of having a house in the country, and a friend of her brother's lent us his at St. Brice.

In this village were two estimable men, intimately acquainted, and whose friendship I soon enjoyed. One was the rector, the Abbé Maury's eldest brother, a man

of a sound mind and excellent character; the other was an old bookseller, Latour; a mild, peaceful, modest man, of strict integrity, and as obliging to me as he was charitable to the poor of the village. His library was my own.

I was then writing for the *Encyclopædia*. I rose with the sun; and after having employed eight or ten hours of the morning in committing to paper a multitude of observations that I had made in my studies, I gave the rest of the day to my wife and child. He already formed our delight.

In proportion as the good milk of our young Burgundian made health flow in his veins, we saw the flesh become round and firm on his little body and on all his delicate limbs; we saw his face assume a rosy color and finer form. We thought too that we saw his little mind unfold, and gradually come into bloom. Already he seemed to understand us, and began to know us: his smile and voice replied to the smile, to the voice, of his mother; I saw him pleased too with my caresses. His tongue soon essayed those first words of nature, those names so sweet, that from the lips of the child go straight to the heart of the father and mother.

I never shall forget the moment when, in our garden of St. Brice, my child, who had not yet dared to walk without his leading-strings, seeing me at three steps from him on my knees, holding out my hands to him, disengaged himself from the nurse's arms, and with unsteady feet, but resolute, came to throw himself into mine. I know very well that the emotion I felt at that instant is a pleasure that kind nature has rendered common. But alas for those corrupt hearts that need rare and artificial impressions in order to be moved! A

lady of our acquaintance said jokingly of me, "He fancies there is no father in the world but himself." No; I do not pretend that paternal love has delights for me that others may not share; but, were this common happiness granted only to me, I could not be more alive to it. My wife was not less so to the first pleasures of maternal love; and you may conceive that, with our child in our arms, we neither of us wished for any other amusement or any other society.

At the same time, our family and some of our friends used to come and see us on holidays. The Abbé Maury was of the number, and you should have heard how he gloried in having foretold our happiness! We sometimes too saw our neighbors, the rector of St. Brice, the good Latour, and his worthy wife, who loved mine.

We often took solitary walks; and the end of these walks was usually that chestnut wood at Montmorency, which Rousseau has rendered so famous.

"It is here," I used to say to my wife, "that he imagined that romance of Héloïse, in which he has employed so much art and eloquence to give to vice the hue of honesty and the tint of virtue."

My wife was partial to Rousseau; she felt infinitely grateful to him for having persuaded women to suckle their children, and for having used his efforts to render this first stage of life gentle and happy. "We may pardon him something," she used to say, "who has taught us to be mothers."

But I, who had only seen in the conduct and writings of Rousseau a perpetual contrast of beautiful language and vile morality; I, who had seen him announce himself the apostle and the martyr of truth, and abuse it incessantly with adroit sophisms; deliver himself by

calumny from the gratitude that oppressed him; choose in his savage spleen and distorted vision the falsest colors to blacken his friends; defame those men of letters whom he had most reason to praise, in order to signalize himself singly and eclipse them all; I made my wife feel, by the good itself that Rousseau had done, all the evil that he might have abstained from doing, if, instead of employing his art to serve his passions and to color his hatred, revenge, and cruel ingratitude, to give specious appearances to his calumnies, he had worked on himself to subjugate his pride and irascible temper, his dark distrust, his sad animosities, and to become again, what nature had made him, innocently feeling, equitable, sincere, and good.

My wife listened to me sorrowfully. One day she said, "My love, I am sorry to hear you often speak ill of Rousseau. You will be accused of being excited against him by some personal enmity, and perhaps by a little envy."

"As to personality in my aversion," I replied, "that would be very unjust; for he has never offended me, nor has he done me any injury. It would be more possible that there should be envy in it, for I admire him enough in his writings to be envious of him; and I should accuse myself of being so, if I ever detected myself in defaming him. But I experience, on the contrary, in speaking to you of his diseased mind, that bitter sorrow which you feel in hearing me." "Why, then," replied she, "in your writings and conversations, treat him with such severity? Why dwell on his vices? Is there no impiety in disturbing the ashes of the dead?"

"Yes, the ashes of the dead," said I, "who have left no dangerous example, whose memory is not per-

icious to the living. But should sweetened poisons in the writings of an eloquent sophist, and of a seducing corrupter, should the fatal impressions he has made by specious calumnies, should all the contagion that a celebrated talent has left, be suffered to pass current under favor of the respect which we owe to the dead, and perpetuate themselves from age to age? Most certainly I will oppose, either as preservatives or counter-poisons, all the means in my power; and, were it only to clear the memory of my friends from the spots with which he has sullied it, I will leave, if I can, to the proselytes and enthusiasts that are still left him, the choice of thinking that Rousseau was either mad or malicious. They will accuse me of being envious. But a crowd of illustrious men, to whom I have rendered the justest and purest homage, will attest that in my writings envy has never obscured justice and truth. Whilst Rousseau was living, I spared him, because he needed the assistance of men, and I would not injure him. He is now no more; and I owe no indulgence to the reputation of a man who has indulged no one, and who in his memoirs has defamed the men who most loved him."

With respect to Héloïse, my wife was sensible of the danger of its morality; and what I have said of it in my "*Essai sur les Romains*," needed no apology. But did I always so severely condemn the art which Rousseau had employed to render interesting the crime of Saint Preux, and that of Julie, the one seducing his pupil, the other abusing the good faith and probity of Wolmar? No, I confess it; and my morality, in my new position, savored of the influence that our personal interests have on our opinions and feelings.

In living in a world where public morals are cor-

rupted, it is difficult not to contract at least some indulgence for certain fashionable vices. Opinion, example, the seductions of vanity, and above all the allurements of pleasure, impair, in young hearts, the rectitude of genuine feeling: the light air and tone with which old libertines have the art of turning into jest the scruples of virtue, and of converting into ridicule the rules of delicate integrity, imperceptibly destroy the serious importance that the young mind was wont to attach to them. Marriage, above all, has cured me of this feebleness of conscience.

Shall I say it? None but a husband, a father, can judge rationally of those contagious vices that attack morals in their source; of those insinuating and perfidious vices that bring trouble, shame, hatred, desolation, and despair into the bosom of families.

A bachelor, insensible to those afflictions that are foreign to him, neither thinks of the tears he will cause, nor of the fury and revenge he will excite in a wounded heart. Wholly occupied, like the spider, in spreading his nets and watching the instant for entangling his prey, he either effaces from his moral code respect for the most holy rights, or if they ever recur to his memory, he considers them as laws that are fallen into disuse. What so many others permit themselves to do, or applaud themselves for having done, appears to him, if not lawful, at least excusable. He thinks he may enjoy the license of the morals of the times.

But, when he has put himself in the number of those whom the seductions of an adroit corrupter may render wretched for life; when he sees that the artifices, the flattering and enticing language of a young fop have only to surprise the innocence of a daughter or the weakness of a wife to ruin the peace of the most virtu-

ous man, and one day perhaps his own; warned by his personal interest, he feels how essentially the honor, the faith, the sanctity of conjugal and domestic morals are to a husband and a father inviolable properties; and then he sees, with a severe eye, all that is criminal and dishonorable in profligate manners, with whatever decoration eloquence may clothe it, and under whatever exterior of virtue and decorum an industrious writer may disguise it.

I therefore blamed Rousseau; but in blaming him I grieved that splenetic passions, a sombre pride, and a vain glory, should have spoiled the groundwork of so fine a spirit.

If I had had a passion for celebrity, two great examples would have cured me of it; that of Voltaire, and that of Rousseau; examples very different, quite opposite in many respects, but agreeing in this point, that the same thirst for praise and renown was the torment of their lives.

Voltaire, whom I had just seen expire, had sought glory by all the roads that are open to genius, which he had deserved by his immense exertions and brilliant results. But, on every road to fame, he had encountered envy, and all the furies by whom she is escorted. Never did any man of letters bear so much outrage, without any other crime than that of possessing great talents and the ardor of signalizing them. Those who envied him fancied they could be his rivals by showing themselves his enemies; those whom as he passed he trod under foot, insulted him as they crawled. His whole life was a contest, which he unweariedly maintained. The combat was not always worthy of him; and he had more insects to crush than serpents to strangle. But, though he would not provoke, neither would he

overlook offence : the vilest of his assailants have been branded by his hand : the shaft of ridicule was the instrument of his vengeance, and he wielded it most fearfully and cruelly. But to him, the greatest of blessings, repose, was unknown. It is true that envy at last appeared tired of the pursuit, and began to spare him on the brink of the grave. On his return to Paris, after a long exile, he enjoyed his renown, and felt the enthusiasm of a whole people grateful for the pleasures that he had afforded them. The weak and last effort that he made to amuse them, "Irène," was applauded as "Zaïre" had been ; and this representation, at which he was crowned, was to him the most delightful triumph. But at what a moment did this tardy consolation reach him, the recompense of so much anxiety ! The next day I saw him in bed. "Well," said I, "are you at last satiated with glory ?" "Ah ! my good friend," he replied ; "you talk to me of glory, and I am dying in frightful torture."

Such was the end of one of the most illustrious of all literary men, and one of the most engaging of all social companions. He was alive to injury, but so he was to friendship. That with which he honored my youth was unvaried till his death, and a last proof that he showed me of it was the reception, full of grace and kindness, which he gave my wife when I presented her to him. His house was perpetually filled with the crowd that pressed to see him, and we were witnesses of the fatigue he underwent to reply suitably to each. That continual attention exhausted his strength ; and for his true friends it was a painful spectacle. But we were admitted to his supper-parties, and there we enjoyed the last glimmerings of that brilliant intellect which was soon to be wholly extinguished.



Like him, Rousseau was wretched, and through the same passion. But the ambition of Voltaire was imbued with modesty, as may be seen in his letters; whereas that of Rousseau was coupled with vanity; the proof of it is in his writings.

I had seen him, in the society of the most estimable men of letters, welcomed and esteemed; that was not enough for him; their celebrity shaded his, and he thought them jealous. To him their kindness was suspicious. He began by distrusting, and ended by aspersing them. He had friends in spite of himself; their benevolence was inopportune to him. He received their favors; but he accused them of wishing to humble, to dishonor, to defame him; and he returned their beneficence with the most odious defamation.

He was never spoken of in society but with extreme interest. Even criticism itself as regarded him was full of respect, and tempered with eulogies. He would say, it was only the more artful and perfidious. In the most calm retreat, he always chose to fancy or affirm that he was persecuted. His disease was that of imagining in the most fortuitous events, in the most common occurrences, some intention of injuring him, as if in the world all the eyes of envy had been fixed on him alone. If the Duke de Choiseul had conceived the conquest of Corsica, it was in order to take from him the glory of being its legislator. If the same duke went to sup at Montmorency with the Duchess of Luxembourg, it was to usurp the place that he was wont to occupy near her at table. Hume, he would say, was envious of the reception which the Prince de Conty had given him. He never pardoned Grimm for having had some preference over him at Madame d'Epinay's; and you may see in his "*Memoirs*" how his cruel vanity revenged this offence.

Thus were the lives of Voltaire and Rousseau perpetually, though differently, agitated. For the one had often been reserved the sharpest pains, yet not without some intense enjoyments ; for the other, one continued flood of bitterness, without any mixture of joy or sweetness. Most certainly at no price would I have wished for the condition of Rousseau ; he could not endure it himself ; and, after having poisoned his days, I am not at all surprised that he voluntarily abridged their duration.

As for Voltaire, I confess that I likewise thought his glory too dearly purchased by the afflictions to which it had exposed him ; and I used to repeat again and again, — Less lustre and more quiet.

Limited in my ambition, first by the necessity of adapting my flight to the feebleness of my wings, and then again by the love of that tranquillity of mind which accompanies peaceful employment, and which I believed to be the lot of humble mediocrity, I should have been contented in that happy state. Thus, early renouncing all presumptuous attempts, I had as it were capitulated with envy, and reduced myself to that kind of writing in which, with her, success is pardoned without difficulty. I was not the more spared for it ; and I found that little things still inspire, in little souls, an envious malignity.

During my residence at St. Brice an event of a more serious interest occurred. It was the retreat of M. Necker from the ministry. I have already said that his character was by no means attractive. He had never given me reason to think him my friend. I was not his. But as he showed me as much esteem and kindness as I could expect from a man so coldly polite, and as on my part I had a high opinion of his

talents, knowledge, and the ambition he had shown to signalize himself by benefiting the state, I was grieved at his retreat.

I felt besides for Madame Necker the sincerest veneration; for in her I had witnessed nothing but kindness, prudence, and virtue; and the particular affection with which she honored me well deserved that I should take some interest in an event which I felt sure had deeply affected her.

When I heard of it at St. Brice, imagining they had already retired to their country house at St. Ouën, I instantly went thither. They had not yet arrived; and, pursuing my road, I was going to their house in Paris. I met them on my way. "Were you coming to see us?" said Necker: "get into our carriage, and come to St. Ouën." I accompanied them there. We were alone the whole evening with Germain, Necker's brother, and neither the husband nor the wife concealed from me their deep sorrow. I endeavored to soothe it by speaking of the regret they would leave in the public mind, and of the just esteem which would follow them in their retreat; in which I did not flatter them. "I only regret," said Necker, "the good I had to do, and which I should have done, if time had been given me."

For my part, I said, in his situation, I saw nothing but an honorable retreat, an independent fortune, tranquillity, liberty, occupations of which he would have the choice, a society composed of those who are neither attracted by favor nor repelled by misfortune; and, in his home, all that retired and domestic life can have most grateful to a wise man. But I confess that I spoke from my own feelings rather than from his; for I readily perceived that, without the occupation of public affairs, and the influence which they give, he

could not be happy. His wife appeared touched with the pains I took to lighten the impression which this blow had produced. Thus, my connection with them, very far from being weakened by this event, became the more intimate.

My wife, for my sake, returned their offers of friendship and accepted their invitations. But she had an insurmountable aversion to M. Necker. She had come from Lyons under the persuasion that M. Necker was the cause of the disgrace of M. Turgot, the benefactor of her family. And, with respect to Madame Necker, she did not find in her that inviting air which she herself had amongst her friends.

At the same time I was losing successively my old friends. The Swedish ambassador, recalled home to his king to be his confidential minister, was removed from me forever. The Neapolitan ambassador quitted us to go and be viceroy in Sicily. Both these separations were so much the more painful to me because they were to be lasting. Caraccioli's letters were full of regret. He perpetually invited me into Sicily with my family, offering to send me a vessel to Marseilles, in order to transport us to Palermo.

I have described my friendship for D'Alembert, and the value I set on his, during forty years. After the death of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, he was a prey to sorrow and melancholy. But occasionally he would comfort his heart's deep wound with some drops of the balm of this consoling friendship. It was, above all, with my wife that he loved to divert his cares: she took the tenderest interest in them. He and Thomas, the two men of letters whose talents and knowledge ought to have most overawed her, were those with whom she was most at her ease. She preferred no

amusement to their conversation. Thomas appeared to have still a long time to live for glory and friendship. But D'Alembert began to feel the torments of the stone; and he shortly existed only to suffer and die slowly in the most excruciating anguish.

In a feeble sketch of his eulogy, I have essayed to paint the mild equality of his character, always true, always simple, because it was natural, removed from all concealment, "with a mixture of force and feebleness, but whose force was virtue, and whose feebleness was benevolent feeling." In lamenting his loss, I was far from thinking of succeeding him in the place of perpetual secretary to the French Academy. I was myself on the point of following him to the tomb, being seized with a malignant fever, similar to that of which Bouvard had already cured me, and from which he rescued me again. How infinitely should I bless the memory of a man to whom I have twice owed my life, and who, till the total failure of his strength and spirits, never ceased to bestow the tenderest cares on my children!

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## BOOK XL

ON our return to Paris, the French Academy having been summoned for the election of its perpetual secretary, of twenty-four elective voices, eighteen were united in my favor. My two competitors were Beauzée and Suard.

My country house had in summer still more charms for me than the town had ever had. A chosen society, composed to my wife's taste, came successively to

vary our leisure, and enjoy with us that rustic opulence that our gardens afforded, where the espalier, the orchard, the vine-arbor, and the kitchen-garden furnished us with the fruits and vegetables of every season; presents with which nature covered gratuitously a frugal table, and which changed a moderate dinner into a delicious feast. There reigned innocent mirth, confidence, a liberality of thought whose limits all knew, and which no one ever abused.

"We are too happy," said my wife; "some misfortune will happen to us." She was very right. Learn, my dear children, how near grief is to joy in every situation of life.

This kind and feeling mother had suckled her third child. He was a fine boy, in full health: we thought we had only to watch his growth and expanding beauty, when suddenly he was seized with a mortal stupor. Bouvard hastens to his aid; he exhausts the resources of art to find a remedy for this fatal drowsiness. The child had his eyes open; but Bouvard perceived that the iris was dilated: he passed a candle near it; the eyes and the eyelids remained motionless. "Ah," said he, "the organ of sight is palsied; the humor has attacked the brain; there is now no remedy"; and saying these words, the good old man wept; he felt the blow which smote a father's heart.

In that cruel moment I would have removed the mother. But, on her knees, by the bed of her child, her eyes filled with tears, her arms extended to heaven, suffocated by her sobs, "Let me," said she; "ah! let me at least receive his last sigh." And how her sobs, her tears, her cries, redoubled when she saw him expire! I say nothing of my own grief, I can think only of hers. It was so acute that for many years

she could not bear to hear its object named. If she spoke of it herself, it was only in confused terms: "since my misfortune," would she say; unable to bring her tongue to articulate, "since the death of my child."

During the time that D'Alembert was secretary of the French Academy he was earnestly desirous to infuse an interest into our public assemblies, as well as those of our private sittings, at which sovereigns were present. No one contributed to this interest so much as himself. Sometimes, however, his own efforts did not suffice, and it was a real grief to him to see himself abandoned. He would then recur to me, complaining of the neglect of so many men of letters, who composed the Academy, and entreating me to aid him to sustain the credit of the institution.

On these pressing occasions I composed pieces of poetry, or prose, which I adapted to the circumstances; such as the three discourses in verse, On Eloquence, On History, On the Hope of Fame after Death. This last, read at the reception of Ducis, Voltaire's successor, had at least the merit of pertinence, and made a lively impression on the assembly.

Of the pieces of prose which I read, that with which the public appeared most pleased was the eulogy on Colardeau, at the reception of La Harpe. But what touched myself much more was, the success of a sketch of the eulogy on D'Alembert, and that of the little poem on the death of Prince Leopold of Brunswick. On this latter I think I should take permission to go into some detail, in order to explain my conduct clearly. The trait of humanity and heroic devotion of the young Prince Leopold of Brunswick having sensibly affected the young Count d'Artois, this prince had proposed to

the French Academy a prize of one hundred and twenty guineas for that poem in which this noble action should be most worthily celebrated. I was then perpetual secretary to the Academy, and, in my quality of judge, it was forbidden me to present myself as a competitor. But, as it very often happened that even the prize of poetry, the subject of which was left free and at the choice of the poets, was not granted, I was very uneasy lest nothing worthy should be offered; and then what shame, and what humiliation for French literature? With what pain would the Academy confess to all Europe that so fine a subject had inspired no poet.

As I was impressed and strongly moved by it, I could not resist the desire of treating it myself, firmly resolved not to let my work be known till after it should be decided that no other merited the prize.

I therefore waited till all the poems that were sent had passed under the eyes of the Academy; and they were all rejected. At last, seeing that every member lamented that the most virtuous heroism should not be worthily praised, I confided to the Academy the essay I had made, without aspiring to the prize. The Academy was pleased to approve it; and the Count d'Artois, to whom the ill success of the competition was necessarily announced, learned at the same time what one of the members had done to supply the deficiency. The prince ordered that the same prize should be offered for the following year; but he desired to be acquainted privately with my work, and permitted me to send it to the reigning Prince of Brunswick.

A few days afterwards the Count d'Artois sent me word by M. de Vaudreuil that he had ordered for me a very rich gold box. I answered that on every other occasion I should receive with respect any present from



the king's brother; but that on this I could accept nothing which might make me suspected of having courted reward; that this rich box would only be a prize in disguise; that if the prince had the kindness to give me one of paper, with his portrait on it, I should receive it as a most precious gift; but that I would have no other. M. de Vaudreuil insisted; but he saw me so firm in my resolution that he gave up all hope of shaking it; and this was the answer which he carried back to the Count d'Artois. "Marmontel consults decorum only for himself," said the prince; "but it does not become me to make him a mean present;" and, after having reflected a moment, "Well," resumed he, "I will give him my portrait at full length." The *bailli* De Crussol, the gentleman of his chamber, was ordered to get a good copy made, and the frame of it was decorated with attributes most honorable to me.

The reigning Prince of Brunswick did not receive my homage less favorably; he answered it by a letter written with his own hand and full of kindness, to which were added two gold medals struck in memory of his virtuous brother.

It was about this time that my wife agreed with me on the necessity of taking a house to ourselves. But, as the separation took place with the kind consent of her uncles and mother, we removed from them as short a distance as possible. My wife was not insensible to the pleasure of finding herself at home, mistress of her own house. For myself, I felt, I confess, great comfort in living with the Abbé Morellet in complete independence; and he himself was much more at his ease with me. He had introduced into his house another niece, young, lovely, full of wit and accomplishments, now Madaine Cheron, to whom my

wife resigned her apartment. Thus all passed with the best understanding.

What rendered our situation still more agreeable was the ease we derived from an increase of fortune. Without speaking of the profits of my works, and these profits were considerable, the place of secretary to the French Academy, joined with that of historiographer of the royal buildings, which my friend M. d'Angiviller had procured for me on the death of Thomas, were annually worth one hundred and twenty guineas. My assiduity at the Academy doubled my fees there for personal attendance. I had inherited on the death of Thomas half the pension of eighty guineas which he had enjoyed, and which was divided between Gaillard and myself, as that of Le Batteau had been. My lodgings of secretary at the Louvre, and of historiographer at Versailles, which I had chosen to let, brought me together seventy-two guineas. I had one hundred and twenty on the Mercury. Some of the money I had saved was advantageously vested in the enterprise of Swan Island; that which I had put in the customs of the city of Lyons raised me legal interest, as well as other sums which I had placed elsewhere. I therefore found myself enabled to live comfortably at Paris and in the country; and from that time I charged myself solely with the expense of Grignon. My wife's mother, her cousin, and her uncles, had each their room there whenever they chose to come; but they were my visitors.

I indulged myself with a carriage, that three times a week, in an hour and a half, took me from my country house to the Louvre; and, after the sitting of the Academy, brought me back from the Louvre to my country house.

From that period till the epoch of the revolution I cannot express the attraction and charm we experienced in life and social intercourse. My wife was happily delivered of her fourth child. M. and Madame d'Angiviller had stood godfather and godmother; they had made quite a fête of this christening, and had manifested on the occasion the liveliest testimonies of tender friendship. Their godson Charles became as dear to them as if he had been their own child.

The change of ministers again brought me some accession of fortune.

The salary of the historiographer of France, which had formerly been one hundred and twenty guineas, had been reduced to seventy-two, by I know not what miserable economy. The Comptroller-General d'Ormesson thought it just to put it on its ancient footing.

It is well-known that M. de Calonne, when he became minister of finance, declared his contempt for a narrow parsimony. He particularly wished that the labors of literary men should be honorably recompensed. In my quality of perpetual secretary of the French Academy, he sent for me. He expressed to me his intention of patronizing the Academy; asked me whether there were any salaries annexed to it, as there were to the Academy of Sciences, and to that of Belles-lettres; I answered, that there were none. What might the fees for personal attendance amount to, with the most assiduous? I assured him that it could not exceed thirty or thirty-five guineas, each fee being but fifteen pence. He promised to double it. He desired to know what was the salary of the secretary; I answered that it was fifty pounds. He thought it too little. He therefore obtained the king's permission to make the fee for being present half a crown, and

to raise the salary of the secretary to one hundred and twenty guineas. Thus my revenue from the Academy might amount to a hundred and eighty pounds or guineas.

I again obtained a new degree of favor and new hopes under the ministry of M. de Lamoignon, keeper of the great seal. The occasion of it was this.

One of the projects of this minister was to reform public instruction, and to render it flourishing. But as he had not himself the knowledge necessary to form a plan and system of studies that should fulfil his intentions, he consulted the Abbé Maury, for whom he had much esteem and friendship. The abbé, not thinking himself sufficiently informed on a subject which he had not particularly studied, advised him to apply to me, and the minister begged him to engage me to call on him. In the conversation that we had together, I saw that in general he conceived like a statesman, and in its full extent, the project I had formed. But the difficulties, the means, the details, were not sufficiently known to him. To assure us both whether I had comprehended his plan, I begged his permission to develop it in a memorial which I would lay before him; but I observed to him, that in reforms nothing appeared to me more to be feared than the ambition of destroying and innovating everything; that I had much respect for ancient institutions; that I willingly deferred to the lessons of experience; and that I considered the abuses and errors of times past as weeds that mix with the pure grain, and which should be rooted out with a light and prudent hand, that the harvest may not be injured.

My memorial was divided into eight principal heads: the distribution of the schools, and of the objects of

instruction according to general utility, or local convenience ; the establishments relative to both these objects ; the discipline ; the method ; the gradual advancement and well-proportioned relation between the different classes ; the general inspection ; the encouragement ; the knowledge and the means of employment of those who should have completed their studies.

In the whole, and in the details of this vast composition, I had taken as my model the institution of the Jesuits, where all was subinitted to one single rule, inspected, maintained, governed by one central authority, and put in action by one universal power. The greatest difficulty was to substitute for the tie of a religious society, and for the spirit which that tie excited, a motive of interest and spring of emulation that should reduce liberty to terms of obedience. For the morals and discipline to be established in the class of the masters, as well as that of the pupils, were necessarily to be the bias of this institution. It was requisite then that the places there should be desirable, not only in their actual state, but for the prospect and hopes they encouraged ; and, in order that exclusion or dismissal should be a punishment, I required that the continuance and duration of these honorable functions should progressively have assured advantages.

The keeper of the seal approved my plan in all its parts ; and, regarding that which might require encouraging rewards, he promised me that nothing should be spared. "No master, if he be a man of merit, shall grow old in obscurity," said he ; "no scholar, distinguished in his course of studies, shall remain without employment. You undertake to make me acquainted, from every extremity of the kingdom, with the choicest

talents; and I engage to appoint them. I see that we understand each other," added he, pressing my hand; "we shall agree together; I depend on you, MarmonTEL; do you likewise depend on me, and for life."

As the Abbé Maury had assured me that the keeper of the seal was an upright and frank man, I had no difficulty in concluding with him the engagement which he proposed to me, and, in perfecting and completing the development of my plan, I thought I was laboring for his glory.

I took care to inform myself on the subject in the minutest detail; and, by means of these conferences, I imagined myself capable of giving the finishing touches to my plan of national instruction, when suddenly, by one of those commotions that overturned the ministry, M. de Lamoignon was dismissed, and exiled to Baviile.

Soon after, the interests of the state, and anxiety for the fate of my country, occupied my mind; my private life changed its complexion, and assumed a coloring that will necessarily tinge the rest of these Memoirs.

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## BOOK XII.

I AM not writing the history of the revolution. "Quæ contentio divina et humana cuncta permiscuit, eoque vecordiæ processit, uti studiis civilibus bellum finem faceret." (*Sallust Jug.*) But, if the life of man be a journey, can I recount mine, without telling through what events, and by what torrents, what abysses, what wilds inhabited by tigers and serpents,

it has passed? For it is thus that I retrace our ten years of misfortunes, almost doubting whether it be not a violent and fatal dream.

Although the situation of public affairs, and the fermentation of the public mind in every branch of the state, had long appeared to threaten an approaching crisis, it is nevertheless true that it happened only from the imprudence of those who persisted in thinking it impossible.

The nation, constantly faithful to its laws, its kings, its ancient constitution, content through instinct with the portion of liberty, property, prosperity, glory, and power which it enjoyed, did not the less hope for some salutary amendment in the vices and errors of the ancient administration.

This hope had above all acquired fresh vigor on the accession of Louis XVI., to the crown. And indeed from that period, if the will of a young king, full of rectitude and candor, had been seconded as it ought to have been, all would have been repaired without any convulsion.

Louis XVI. raised to the throne at the age of twenty, brought with him a feeling, inestimable when moderate, and very dangerous when excessive, — the distrust of his own powers. A clear understanding, a sound reason, a simple, ingenuous, and feeling heart; no vice, no passion, a contempt for luxury and ostentation, a hatred for falsehood and flattery, a thirst for justice and truth; and, with a slight tinge of roughness and severity in his character, that fund of rectitude and moral goodness which is the basis of virtue; in a word, a king twenty years old, weaned from himself, disposed to desire all that should be good and just; and around him a kingdom to regenerate in all its compartments, the greatest

good to do, and the greatest evils to repair, — this it was that awaited the confidential minister whom Louis XVI. should choose for his guide. He selected the Count de Maurepas (May, 1774).

After having been in the ministry for thirty years, after a long exile and a still longer disgrace under the late king, for a very trivial fault, and for which the royal family had never been offended with him, Maurepas had acquired in his retreat that respect which age gives, and which unmerited misfortune commands when sustained with credit. His former ministry had been marked only by the decay of the navy; but as the timid policy of Cardinal Fleury had palsied that part of our forces, Maurepas might have been commanded to act as he did; and, his place being thus only nominal, and the statesman not required to act, he had had nothing to display but his natural qualities, the inviting ease of a man of the world, and the talents of a courtier.

Superficial, and incapable of any serious and profound application, but endowed with a facility of perception and intelligence that unravelled in an instant the most complicated business, he supplied in the council, by habit and dexterity, what he wanted in study and reflection. As accessible and mild as his father was harsh and abrupt; with a supple, insinuating, and flexible mind, fertile in stratagem for attack, in address for defence, in subterfuge to elude, in shifts to divert, in witticisms to disconcert the serious by his pleasantry, in expedients to extricate himself from the nicest and most threatening difficulties; a keen and rapid eye to seize on the foibles or follies of men; an imperceptible art to entice them to his trap or lead them where he wished; an art, yet more formidable,



of turning everything into ridicule, even merit itself, when he wished to undervalue it; in fine, the art of enlivening and simplifying the labors of the cabinet made Maurepas the most seducing of ministers: and had it been requisite only to teach a young king to wield the sceptre lightly and adroitly, to make a mockery of men and things, and the duty of governing an amusement, Maurepas would have been, without any comparison, the man they ought to have chosen.

The king did not disguise to him that excessive timidity which the first impressions of his childhood had left: Maurepas felt, therefore, that the surest way to captivate his good-will was to render easy to him the duties at which he was alarmed. He employed the talent he possessed of simplifying the business of the state, in order to lighten for him its burden. But whether it be that he considered the inveterate evils as past all cure, or that his indolence and levity had not permitted him to examine them, or that he neglected them as diseases arising from an excess of vigor and health, or as constitutional vices inherent in the body politic, — he avoided fatiguing the mind of the young king about them, assuring him that all would go well, provided all was prudently and moderately directed.

But the disorder of the finances is not an evil that can be long palliated and dissembled; distress and discredit soon accuse the minister who conceals and neglects it; and, till the true remedy be found, it grows worse instead of healing.

The Abbé Terrai had been recommended as a skilful minister to Louis XV. An employment of twenty years in the courts of law, amid a crowd of discontented suitors, had inured him to complaint, and accustomed

him to blame ; he thought himself obliged, by his profession, to be the object of public hatred. Maurepas removed him, and put in his place Turgot, equally commendable for his talents and his virtues.

But Maurepas, seeing how much the esteem and confidence which Turgot inspired in the young king exceeded the bounds he wished to prescribe, was soon jealous of his own work, and eagerly hastened to destroy it. Turgot had too much boldness and candor in his character to stoop to the intrigues of a court : he was accused of uncompromising obstinacy and want of address ; and ridicule, which with us degrades everything, having once attacked him, Maurepas felt he might easily be overthrown. He began by listening to, and by encouraging with a smile, the malice of the courtiers ; and soon he himself avowed that in Turgot's views there was more of the spirit of system than of the solid spirit of administration ; that public opinion had erred respecting the skilfulness of this pretended sage ; that his head was filled with idle speculations and philosophical dreams ; no habit of business, no knowledge of men, no capacity for the management of finances, no resources to provide for the pressing exigencies of the state ; a system of perfection that was not of this world, and that existed only in books ; a minute research after that ideal excellence at which we can never arrive ; and, instead of the means of providing for the present, vague and fantastic projects for a distant future ; a fund of ideas, but confused ; great knowledge, but foreign to the object of his ministry ; the pride of Lucifer, and in his presumption the most inflexible obstinacy.

These confidential observations of the old statesman, divulged from mouth to mouth, in order that they

might reach the ear of the king, had the more success as they were not absolutely destitute of the appearance of truth. Turgot was surrounded by studious men, who, having devoted themselves to the science of economy, formed a kind of sect, estimable, without doubt, as to the object of their labors, but whose emphatic language, sententious tone, and frequent chimeras, enveloped in an obscure and ridiculously figurative style, furnished food for pleasantry. Turgot favored them, and showed them an esteem, which they themselves exaggerated by talking of it too loudly. It was therefore not difficult for his enemies to make him pass for the chief of the sect, and the ridicule affixed to the name of Economists rebounded on him.

Turgot was dismissed (May, 1776), and the administration of the finances was confided to Clugny, who seemed to have succeeded only to spoil and plunder with his companions and mistresses, and who died in the ministry after four or five months of impudent pilage, of which the king only was ignorant.

Taboureaux took his place, and, like an honest man, soon confessed himself incapable of filling it. They had given him for an assistant, under the title of director of the royal treasury, a man whose superiority he himself recognized. His modesty honored his retreat. And Necker succeeded him as director-general of the finances.

This Genevese, who has since been the sport of opinion, and so differently celebrated, was then one of the most renowned bankers in Europe. In this profession he enjoyed the public confidence and a most extensive credit. His talents had been tried; and, on subjects analogous to the administration of the finances, his writings had announced a wise and reflecting mind;

but he had, with Maurepas, another merit, his hatred for Turgot.

From the moment that Necker assumed the direction of the finances, his care was to introduce light and order into the chaos he there found. Clugny had left an annual deficit of one million sterling, and at that time this deficit appeared enormous: it was necessary to provide for it. Necker discovered means for this provision. These means were, on one side, to simplify the collection of public revenues, and to clear the channels through which they passed; on the other, to see what were the pretences for expenditure, and to reform their abuses.

The king, in order to be as economical as his minister, had only to defend himself against a too easy beneficence. It was therefore to preserve him from daily seductions that Necker persuaded him to suspend and defer, till the end of every year, the decision of the favors he should dispense, in order that he might see the whole sum before he made a distribution.

Thus Necker was securing by simple economy an overplus that would have enabled him to relieve the public treasury, — when the signal of war reminded him that he would need more abundant resources, both to form immediately a respectable navy, and to arm and provide for it. These urgent expenses were annually to amount to six millions and a quarter sterling. Credit alone could face them, and credit was lost; the mismanagement of the government had ruined it during the peace: it was requisite either to re-establish it or to fall; for no tax, however burdensome, could suffice for the demands of an expensive war; and England, our enemy, could then borrow ten or twelve millions at a moderate interest. Necker has

since been reproached with his loans ; but this reproach should have been addressed to the war, which rendered them indispensable, and which itself was not so.

The art which Necker employed to raise and support credit was to restore confidence, by showing in the balance which economy secured, a solid basis and a certain pledge for the loans he was about to open. The same plan that he had pursued for the savings of peace served to procure him the funds which the war required. It was well known that he had perpetually under his eyes complete and precise statements of the situation of the finances, and, as it were, the balance in hand in all his operations, in order that his engagements might never exceed his resources. It was with this spirit of order that, having found public credit destroyed after a peace of fifteen years, he had been able to re-establish it in the midst of a war that demanded the greatest efforts, and that, in spite of the deficit of 1776, in spite of the expenses of this war and above seventeen millions borrowed to support it, he was in a situation to announce to the king in 1781, in the account he presented to him, that the ordinary revenues then exceeded by four hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds the ordinary and annual expenses of the state. This was telling England that, without any new tax, and even without any new economy, France could procure funds for two campaigns ; for four hundred thousand pounds of revenue, unemployed, sufficed to conclude a loan of eight millions, — a result very capable of hastening a good peace. Necker was nevertheless taxed with vanity for having published this account.

Maurepas was president of the council of finance ; and in the account where Necker exposed the situation of the finances, in a manner so honorable to himself,

Maurepas was not named. This, in the eyes of the old minister, was an injurious omission : he dissembled, but he never pardoned it.

Another affront was the dismissal of a minister, the creature of Maurepas, or rather of his wife, and who was discarded at Necker's request. Maurepas, who had never had any excuse for suffering himself to be governed by women, was however wholly subjugated by his wife. That assiduous complaisance, which is only perpetual adulation, and which, above all for age and in adversity, has so much sweetness and empire, had charmed and captivated him as much as love would have done. He had encouraged the habit of loving or of hating all who were loved or hated by the companion of his misfortune ; and Sartines was one of the men to whom the Countess de Maurepas was most attached.

The king, on dismissing Sartines, consulted Necker on the choice of the successor he should give him ; and Necker recommended to him Marshal Castries. It is well known how gloriously the events and conduct of the war justified this choice. The old minister was but the more jealous of him ; and his closet from that time was like a focus of activity for the cabals that were plotting against Necker. This cabal reckoned too on the protection of the king's brothers.

However circumspect Necker was in his conduct to them, his enemies fancied they perceived that the princes thought him too severe ; but what is much more true, this severity displeased the court ; and in the exchanges, the cessions, the sales ; in short, in all the business that men in favor had been accustomed to negotiate with the king, fearing in this director of

the finances a clear-sighted and rigid examiner, they all longed to be rid of him.

The facility with which the king deprived himself of a skilful minister, who had served him well, may appear somewhat improbable. But these services were discolored by adroit and perfidious insinuations. Necker was represented to him as a man of consummate pride, and of a pride that was inexorable.

The disinterestedness with which Necker had wished to serve the state contributed too to give him the reputation of a lofty republican, who wanted to confer obligation and to owe none; and in refusing, as he had done, the salary annexed to his place, Necker, in my opinion, ought to have expected that a pride, so humiliating for all those who did not and could not possess it, would be wrongly interpreted.

Finally, to leave the king no regret at Necker's retreat, they had contrived to persuade him that, if it were an evil, the evil was inevitable.

A remarkable singularity, and which alone would show the thoughtlessness of Maurepas, is, that when he returned into his drawing-room, delighted at Necker's retreat, his friends, having asked him what man he meant to put in his place, he confessed that he had not thought of it. "It was Cardinal de Rohan," said his niece to me one day, "who, happening to be there, recommended Fleury to him"; and Fleury was appointed.

Necker had left him upwards of eight millions in the royal treasury. This is more than would have been necessary to insure ease to a skilful and well-accredited minister; but, with these succors, Fleury soon fell into distress; he wanted that credit which public esteem grants only to good faith.

Six months after the death of Maurepas, Fleury was

dismissed ; and the king, to have at least an honest man at the head of the finances, appointed D' Ormesson to succeed him.

Unfortunately, this man had only honesty. Indifferent in all beside, a stranger to finance, destitute of means, assailed by necessity, pressed by men in favor, and reduced to the alternatives either of retiring or of supporting himself by unworthy condescensions, he did not hesitate in the choice ; and, with his integrity, he preferred leaving the ministry to dishonoring himself.

A post so slippery, where all seemed to fall, might well have alarmed the ambition of those who aspired to it ; yet this ambition was but the more eager ; and, in all the avenues to favor, there was not an intriguer who, with some slight tint of a knowledge of business, did not think he might pretend to replace him who had just fallen.

In this crowd a man of understanding and talents distinguished himself : it was Calonne. He had chosen a method to succeed, which was the more singular, because it was simple. Far from dissembling his ambition, he had announced it ; and instead of the austerity with which some of his predecessors had armed themselves, he had adorned himself with engaging graces, with amenity, and, above all, with complaisance for women ; he was known to them as the most obliging of men ; and, in confiding his views to those who were in favor, there were no means of which he was not lavish, to conciliate their suffrages. Thus they incessantly extolled his talents, his skill, and his genius. He was scarcely less seducing for men, by an easy and natural politeness, that marked all distinctions without rendering any offensive, and by an air of benevolence that seemed to be favorable to the ambition of all. At



each new change the voice of every courtier was raised for him. He was at last appointed, and, on arriving at Fontainebleau, where the court was, it seemed that he held in his hand the horn of plenty: he was accompanied in triumph (3d November), 1783.

At first, believing himself at the source of inexhaustible riches, without calculating either the wants or the expenses that awaited them; intoxicated with his own prosperity, in which he imagined he soon saw that of the state; disdaining all foresight, neglecting all economy, as unworthy of a powerful king; persuaded that the first art of a man in place was the art of pleasing; resigning to favor the care of his fortune, and thinking only of rendering himself agreeable to those who study to be feared in order to be bought, — he suddenly saw himself encompassed by praise and vainglory. Nothing was talked of but the graces of his reception and the charms of his language. It was to paint his character that the expression of *formes élégantes* was borrowed from the arts; and the new word *obligeance* appeared to be invented for him. It was said that the ministry of the finance had never been filled with so much gracefulness, ease, and dignity. The facility with which he transacted business astonished every one, and the gayety with which he treated it, however important it might be, made him admired as a man of prodigious talent. Even those, in short, who dared to doubt whether he were the best of ministers, were forced to acknowledge that he was the most fascinating. It was said that the business he transacted with the king was only a pastime, so much charm did his address spread over it: nothing rugged, nothing painful, no embarrassment for the present, no inquietude for the future. The king was tranquil, and everybody was

contented; when, at the expiration of three years and some months of that brilliant administration, was revealed the fatal secret of the state's ruin.

It was then that Calonne displayed courage and resources. After having in vain exhausted every means of reviving expiring credit, he saw that his only hope was in some brilliant stroke that should give to the edicts the aspect of the restoration of public confidence; and, to show them invested with an imposing authority, he demanded of the king an assembly of "notables," to whom he would expose the situation of the finances, in order to advise with them on the means of providing for the deficit which, he said, he had found there, and which the war in the two Indies had necessarily augmented.

This assembly was opened at Versailles on the 22d of February, 1787. The statement of the project that Calonne presented there was vast and bold, and perhaps merited more favor than it obtained; for it touched on the great means of increasing the produce of the taxes, and at the same time of rendering them lighter by dividing them. But the "notables" were of the number of those who would be affected by the new taxes; and to this, very unhappily for themselves and the state, they never would consent. Of Calonne's projects, some were thought confused and deceitful; others, full of difficulties that rendered them impracticable; others, in short, bad, even if they could have been executed. Such was the result of the observations of the "notables" on that part of his plan which had undergone their examination, for it was not discussed even to the end.

The king felt great reluctance to part with Calonne; he liked his manner of transacting business; he was

persuaded of the excellence of his projects ; but, foreseeing that they would be rejected by the parliament, as they were by the "notables," he did violence to his own feelings, and dismissed him. He knew that Miro-ménil, the keeper of the seal, was Calonne's enemy, and that he had opposed Calonne's operations with his whole power ; he dismissed him at the same time as a kind of sacrifice to so favorite a minister (Calonne the 8th of April, Miro-ménil the 9th). Fourqueux was called to the direction of the finances ; the seal was given to the President de Lamoignon.

It was not possible that Fourqueux should long keep his place ; but he had been recommended to the king by those he consulted, till they should have completely destroyed his prejudice against a man whom they wished to give him as a confidential minister, and to whom they looked for the preservation of the state.

The state of the king's mind at that moment is expressed to the life in the details I am going to transcribe.

"When the king charged me with his letter for M. de Fourqueux," says the Count de Montmorin, in some notes which he has confided to me, "I thought it my duty to represent to him that the weighty direction of the finances appeared to me to be too much above the abilities of that good magistrate. The king appeared to feel that my anxiety was well founded." 'But who should I take then ?' said he. I answered 'that it was impossible for me not to be astonished at that question, while there existed a man who united in his favor the suffrages of a whole people ; that, at all times it was necessary not to oppose public opinion in choosing a financial minister ; but, that, in the critical circumstances in which he then was, it did not suffice not

to oppose it, but that it was indispensably necessary to be guided by it.' I added, 'that so long as M. Necker should exist, it would be impossible for him to have any other minister of finance,' because the public would always see with ill-humor and chagrin that place occupied by any other.' . . . The king answered me (indeed with the air of the deepest affliction) 'Well, you have only to recall him.' But the Baron de Breteuil then rose, with extreme warmth, against the half-wrested resolution; he represented the inconsistency that there would be in recalling a man who was scarcely arrived at the place fixed for his exile, in order to put him at the head of the administration; 'What weakness such a conduct would betray; what force it would give to him, who, thus placed by opinion, would have no obligation but to that and to himself.' He spoke strongly and at length on the abuse that Necker would not fail to make of such a position. He painted his character in colors that were best calculated to make an impression on a king naturally jealous of his authority, and who had a confused presentiment that he had enemies who wanted to tear it from him, but who believed it still entire in his hands, and who wished to preserve it. . . . The Archbishop of Toulouse was then proposed, and accepted without resistance. At the same time the king observed that he had the reputation of being a restless and ambitious man, and that we should perhaps repent of having recommended him to his choice. But he added that he had reason to think that the defects of this prelate had been exaggerated to him; that the prejudices he had felt against him had long been weakened; and that he had been pleased with some memorials on the administration of the finances which he had sent him."

I have omitted none of these details, both because they will make known the mind and disposition of the king, whose character was perhaps a little too facile, but simple, natural, and good ; and, above all, because they discover how the principal link in the chain of our misfortunes was formed.

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### BOOK XIII.

BRIENNE had distinguished himself in the states of Languedoc. He had there shown he possessed the talent his place required ; and in the little circle of his administration he might have been thought clever. Like Calonne, he had that lively, quick, and resolute character which imposes on the multitude. He had, likewise, something of the address of Maurepas ; but he had neither the air of good-nature and affability of the one, nor the supple and conciliatory manners of the other. In most of the circles which confer reputation, every one concluded that he came to the ministry with an enlightened mind and his portfolio replete with the most luminous projects. He did come, and his portfolio and his head proved to be equally empty.

The cry of the nation demanded the recall of Necker, and had Brienne himself solicited the king to grant his recall, it would have honored him. In vain did his friends entreat him to call to his aid the man whom the public voice invoked ; he answered, "The king and queen will not consent." "It depends on you," said Montmorin, "to persuade the queen that Necker is necessary to you, and I will undertake to convince the king." Brienne, thus closely pressed, answered, "I can do without him." Thus empires perish.

The finances were ruined, the royal treasury was empty. There was no new tax, no new loan, no hope of credit, but on all sides the most urgent wants : the annuities on the city, the pay even of the troops, all was failing at once. Nothing less would have sufficed to force Brienne to acknowledge his own incapacity, or at least his actual inability to extricate the state from this abyss of misery. He chose to complete his dishonor, and, by an order of council of the 16th of August, declared that the two fifths of the payments from the royal treasury should be made in government notes. Public maledictions poured on him like a deluge. At last, he resolved to demand the recall of Necker. But Necker refused to join him in the ministry. He answered, that, if he had still some hope of being useful to the state, that hope was founded on the confidence with which the nation honored him, and that to preserve some credit himself, it was evident under what conditions only he could return. "This answer is my sentence," said Brienne to the keeper of the seals ; "I must resign" ; and he gave in his resignation (the 23d of August, 1788).

The consideration which Necker had enjoyed had increased during his exile ; but the encouragement inspired by the public esteem was counterbalanced by the inquietude which the situation of the kingdom could not but create.

Around the capital sixty square leagues of country, and of most fertile country, absolutely laid waste by the hail on the eve of the harvest ; a bad crop in all the rest of the kingdom ; the price of corn exaggerated still more by the fear of famine, and an urgent necessity to import some from abroad ; neither money nor credit ; all government paper decried in the market, and almost

without value; every way to loans and taxes interdicted; on one side, the receipt necessarily impoverished; on the other, the expenditure unavoidably increased; and, instead of the contributions to which the inhabitants of the country would have been subjected, succors to be sent to all the places which the hail had just ruined; the courts of justice inactive; license everywhere unpunished, and the police intimidated; discipline even tottering among the troops, and attacked in that principle of obedience and fidelity which is its nerve and spring; all ancient public rights discussed and questioned; in short, all classes and orders of the state, without agreeing with each other or each with itself on what the states-general ought to be, uniting to demand them with the greatest ardor, and till then refusing to listen to any supply; — such was the frightful crisis in which Necker found the kingdom.

His first care was to re-establish order; the parliaments were restored to their functions; justice resumed its course, and the laws of police their force and action. The treasury, empty on Necker's arrival, appeared suddenly to fill; all payments were made in specie; and a few weeks afterwards a new decree of the council completely effaced the shame of Brienne's bankruptcy.

Necker had assumed an ascendancy in the council that may easily be conceived by considering the circumstances which produced his return to the ministry. A winter as severe as that of 1709, and of longer duration, made the resources of this minister appear still more astonishing. No new tax, no new loan known; and, by means of a little slowness which excited no complaint, the annuities, the pensions, every just demand,

were regularly discharged. Corn flowed into our ports from all the countries of the world, to save us from famine ; succor was granted to the unfortunate peasantry ; relief to the sick, to the aged, and to the orphan, in hospitals ; immense expenses were incurred to secure and accelerate the arrival of provisions ; such were the services that Necker rendered the state ; and it is probable that, if he had been kept in the ministry, without dismissal, and had been suffered to profit by the benefits of peace, the prosperous situation of the kingdom would have offered so pleasing a picture that no one would have thought of the states-general, at least, no one would have mentioned them.

But the king's word being pledged to assemble them in the month of May, it was difficult for Necker to make him break that engagement, without alienating the public mind. Besides, he has himself not dissembled that, at the bottom of his heart, he wished for the convocation of the states. " I thought," said he, in speaking of his conduct at this epoch, " that by maintaining the tranquillity of the kingdom, by propping the tottering edifice of the finances, by relieving the scarcity with abundant provision, and by thus smoothing every way to the greatest and most desired of events, I should have executed my task well, and should have done my duty as a public man, as a good citizen, and as the faithful servant of a king who wished well to the state." As to the motives that animated him, he has explained them to us likewise. " No man," said he, " knew better than I how unstable and transient was that good which could be done under a government where the principles of administration were changed at the whim of the ministers, and the ministers at the whim of intrigue. I had observed,



that, in the transient course of the administration of public men, no general idea had time to establish itself, nor any essential good to acquire permanency and firmness."

But if this convocation had its advantages, it had likewise its dangers; and, above all, the form that should be given to it might be of weighty importance and extreme delicacy.

The examples of past times, for the composition of the states-general, were uncertain and various. But the majority of these examples were favorable to the privileged orders; and if that of 1614 were followed, as the parliament demanded and expected, the order of the nobility and that of the clergy would be secure of preponderating. Their rights and privileges would be confirmed and guaranteed to them for the future; and, in return for the service which the parliament would have rendered them, it would itself be constituted their perpetual representative, in the interval of the assemblies. But, in the popular class, the public mind had assumed a character that no longer harmonized with the pretensions of the parliamentary and feudal classes. The laborer in the village, the mechanic in the town, the honest citizen occupied by trade and industry, desired only to be relieved; if left to themselves, being peaceful, they would have deputed none but peaceful men. But, in cities, and above all in Paris, there is a class of men, who, although distinguished by education, are connected with the people by birth, make common cause with them, and, when their own rights are in question, espouse the people's interests, lend them their talents, and imbue them with their own passions. It was in this class that a contentious and daring spirit of innovation had long been forming, and which every day acquired more force and greater influence.

The very recent example of North America, restored to freedom by its own courage, and by the succor of our arms, was perpetually placed before us. The neighborhood of the English, the now more frequent practice of visiting their country, the study of their language, the reputation of their authors, the assiduous reading of their newspapers, the eager curiosity to know what was said and done in their parliament, the lively praises that were bestowed on their orators, the interest that was taken in their debates, in short, even the affectation of imitating and adopting their taste, their fashions, their manners, all announced a ripening disposition to resemble them; and, in truth, that spectacle of public liberty and personal security, that noble and worthy use of the right and property in the voluntary acceptance and equitable assessment of the taxes necessary to answer the exigencies of the state, might justly excite a spirit of emulation. It was under the influence of such examples that some well-educated, turbulent, and daring men everywhere admonished the people not to forget their own rights, and the minister to guard them. The minister desired only to maintain the rights of the people; for the league of the parliaments, of the clergy, and of the nobility, against the royal authority had forced him to look on the people as the king's refuge.

The hall which was destined for the general assemblies, and in which the greatest interests of the state would be discussed by the three orders, was surrounded by galleries, as if to invite the people to come and listen to the debate, to support their own party, to insult, to threaten, to intimidate their opponents, and to change the tribune into a stage, where they might encourage and warm their actors by applause. I mark

these details, because they have been of the weightiest importance. But M. Necker would only figure to himself the assembly of the states as a peaceful, imposing, solemn, august spectacle, which the people would delight to contemplate. His hopes were never unmixed with inquietude; but, as he attributed great power to moral feeling, he flattered himself that the surest way of preventing the troubles that might arise from the discord of the three orders, was to animate them all with that enthusiasm for the public good which renders facile and gentle the greatest sacrifice of the interests of a collective body, and of the interests of the individual. He made his first trial of it in the publication of his report to the council of state of the 27th of December, 1788; and it was by the example of the king himself that he hoped to inspire, from that moment, this generous emulation.

In calling to mind the confession which the king had made to him, "that, for some years past, he had only had moments of happiness," "Sire," said he, "this happiness you will now recover and enjoy. You command a nation that knows how to love. If political novelties, for which it is not calculated, have diverted it for a moment from its natural character, soon fixed by your beneficence, and strengthened in its confidence by the purity of your intentions, it will think only of enjoying that happy and constant order which it will owe to you. This grateful nation does not yet know all that you intend to do for its happiness. You have told it, sire, to your ministers, who are honored with your confidence: you not only desire to ratify the promise you have made to impose no new tax without the consent of the states, but it is your will that none be prolonged, without that condition. You

are determined to secure the periodical return of the states-general, by consulting them on the interval of their convocations, and on the means of giving to these dispositions a lasting stability. To form a solid bond between the private administration of each province and the general legislation, you desire that the deputies from every part of the kingdom should concert together on the most eligible plan, and your majesty is disposed to give it your assent. It is likewise your majesty's wish to prevent, in the most efficacious manner, the disorder which the misconduct, or the incapacity of your ministers might introduce into the finances; and, in the number of expenses that you desire to limit, you do not even except those which belong more particularly to your own person. Your majesty purposes to anticipate the legitimate wish of your subjects, by inviting the states-general to examine the great question that has arisen on *lettres-de-cachet*. You only wish, sire, for the maintenance of order, and you are willing to abandon to the law all it can execute. It is on the same principle that your majesty is impatient for the counsel of the states-general, on the measure of freedom that should be granted to the press, and to the publication of works relative to administration. In short, sire, you prefer, with reason, the lasting decisions of the states-general of your kingdom to the transient counsels of your ministers; and, when you shall have proved the wisdom and prudence of that august body, you will not fear to give it a stability that may inspire confidence, and protect it against all changes in the sentiments of the kings your successors."

This speech of the minister, printed, published, and spread throughout the kingdom, as the solemn pledge of the king's intentions, gave him a legitimate title to

the confidence of the people ; and if, in pursuance of these dispositions, the states had been pleased to constitute themselves the supreme council of a king who was only desirous of what was just, and who desired all that was just ; of a king, who, in concert with the nation, was resolved to fix on stable bases the very bounds of his own power, and the column of liberty and public happiness ; the French monarchy, without changing its nature, would have become the mildest, the most moderate, and most solid government that ever existed. The king, in this legislative council of the nation, was going to preside like a father, to consult with his children, to regulate, to conciliate their rights, rather as a friend than an arbiter, and by their aid to reduce into laws the means of rendering them happy. It was in this spirit that the minister thought he was disposing everything to give to the nation, and at the same time was preserving to the crown that character of grandeur, power, and majesty which this intimate union should insure, and which separately they could never fully enjoy. It is thus that the king expressed it.

But, in a petulant and inconstant people, who are suddenly eager to be free before they have learned to be so, it is but too natural that the first enthusiastic transport should carry them beyond the bounds of that freedom ; and when these bounds are once overleaped, the rest is the domain of passion, crime, and error.

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## BOOK XIV.

ALTHOUGH Paris was the nurse and parent of that fermentation which was excited throughout the king-

dom, the primary assemblies were there marked by no disturbance, and appeared to be wholly occupied with the choice of good electors, in order to have good representatives.

I was of the number of electors named by the section of *les Feuillans* : I was also one of the commissioners charged with the statements of the demands for the removal of certain grievances ; and I can say, that in these demands there was nothing but what was useful and just. Thus the spirit of this section was reasonable and temperate.

It was not the same with the electoral assembly : the majority was at first pure and healthy ; but we were assailed by a cloud of intriguers, who came to infuse the contagious air they had breathed in the conferences of Duport, one of the factious members of the parliament.

It is well known that the eloquence of the tribune has at all times been exerted to move the passions of the people ; and among us the only school for this popular eloquence was the bar. Even those who, in pleading, had only acquired its assurance, its action, and its declamation, had a very great advantage over the unpractised individual. A cool reasoner, a solid and reflecting mind, that wanted abundant and facile elocution, could never find support against the vehemence of a disciplined declaimer.

The surest way of propagating the revolutionary doctrine throughout the kingdom had therefore been to engage the corps of lawyers in its favor ; and nothing had been more easy. Republican by character, proud and jealous of its freedom, prone to sway, by the habit of holding in its hands the fortune of its clients, scattered throughout the realm, enjoying public confidence and

public esteem, constantly communicating with all ranks of society, exercised in the art of moving the passions and subjugating the will, this class of lawyers could not but have an irresistible ascendancy over the multitude ; and some by the force of genuine eloquence, others by that flow and noise of words that make weak heads giddy and impose on them by idle sounds, could not fail to excel in the popular assemblies, and there to govern opinion ; especially by announcing themselves as the avengers of the people's wrongs and the defenders of their rights.

It was, I believe, with a blind enthusiasm for the public good that this troop of lawyers joined us ; they were supported by a train of ambitious republicans, who, like them, aspired to render themselves celebrated in the councils of a free people. Target, distinguished at the bar, and in good repute among us, came there to perform a principal part.

The government had sent us the minister of police as our president. This was a false step, an act that was indefensible. An assembly essentially free had a right to a president taken from its own body, and of its own choice. This magistrate sustained his mission honorably : his firmness and prudence commanded our admiration, but in vain. The cause was definitively pleaded with him by Target, the lawyer ; and the latter, for having defended the rights of the assembly, was proclaimed its president.

Our functions were not confined to the election of deputies, we had likewise to form their instructions for complaints, petitions, and demands ; and every grievance gave rise to fresh declamation. The indefinite words of equality, liberty, and the sovereignty of the people, resounded in our ears ; each heard them, and

each interpreted them as his fancy directed. In the regulations of police, in the money edicts, in the gradations of authority, on which order and public tranquillity rest, there was nothing in which some mark of tyranny was not evident ; and a ridiculous importance was attributed to the minutest details. Of this I will cite but one example.

The subject was the wall and gates of Paris, which were denounced as calculated only to confine beasts, and as most offensive to men.

“ I have seen,” said one of the orators, “ yes, citizens, I have seen at the gate St. Victor, on one of the pillars, in sculpture, — will you believe it ? — I have seen the enormous head of a lion, open-jawed, and vomiting chains, with which he threatens the passengers. Is it possible to imagine a more fearful emblem of despotism and slavery ? ” The orator himself imitated the lion’s roar. The whole audience was moved ; and I, who so often pass by the gate St. Victor, was astonished that this horrible image should never have struck me. On that day, therefore, I paid particular attention to it ; and on the pilaster I saw as an ornament a shield suspended by a small chain, which the sculptor had fixed to a little lion’s muzzle, such as we see on the knocker of a door, or on the cock of a fountain.

Although I was almost isolated, and that my party in the electoral assembly was every day becoming more feeble, I did not cease to tell those who would listen to me, how gross and easy this art of imposing by impudent declamation appeared to me. My principles were known, I dissembled none of them ; and care was taken to whisper in every ear that I was the friend of the ministry, and loaded with the favors of the king. The elections were terminated. I was not elected : the Abbé



Sièyes was preferred to me ; I thanked Heaven for my exclusion ; for I thought I foresaw what would pass in the national assembly, and shortly afterwards I was more fully informed.

We had in the French Academy one of the most violent partisans of the republican faction : it was Chamfort, a man of most delicate, subtle, and enchanting wit, when he gayly indulged it on the vices and follies of society ; but morose and bitterly malevolent against the superiorities of rank and fortune, that wounded his jealous pride. Of all the envious men scattered through society, Chamfort was one who least pardoned the rich and great for the opulence of their houses, and the delicacies of their tables, of which he himself delighted to partake. In their presence, and in his private intercourse with them, he humored, flattered, and studied to please them ; it seemed even that he loved and esteemed some of them, whose praises he pompously repeated : yet, if he had the complaisance to be their guest or their inmate, it was well understood that it was to obtain by their interest some literary compensation from the court ; and the pensions he enjoyed, to the amount of some hundred pounds, did not acquit them of this obligation : what he received was too little for him. “ Those people,” said he to Florian, “ ought to get me eight hundred a year ; I do not deserve less.” At this price, there were some of the great whom he would honor with his preference, and except from his satires. But, as for the caste in general, he lashed it without pity ; and when he thought he saw these fortunes and this grandeur on the point of being overthrown, and neither of them any longer capable of serving him, he divorced himself from them wholly, and became a partisan of the people.

In our societies, we sometimes amused ourselves with the sallies of his humor : and, without liking him, I treated him with caution and politeness, because I did not wish to make him my enemy.

One day, then, when we were alone at the Louvre after the sitting of the Academy, "Well," said he, "so you are not a deputy?" "No," answered I, "and I console myself as the fox did when he could not reach the grapes : they are too sour." "Indeed," replied he, "I do not think them ripe enough for you. Your soul is of a temper too mild and flexible for the trial to which it would be submitted. You should be reserved for another legislature. Excellent to improve, you do not understand how to destroy."

As I knew that Chainfort was the friend and confidant of Mirabeau, one of the chiefs of the faction, I imagined myself at the source of the information I wished to obtain ; and, to induce him to explain himself, I feigned not to understand him. "You alarm me," said I, "by talking of destroying ; I thought the only wish was to repair."

"Yes," he replied, "but repairs only produce ruins : in attacking an old wall, it is impossible to say that it will not fall under the hammer : and I must frankly own the edifice is here so dilapidated that I should not be astonished if it should prove necessary to pull it down to the ground." "Down to the ground!" exclaimed I. "Why not," rejoined Chainfort, "and erect it on a less Gothic and more regular plan? Would it, for instance, be so great an evil that it should not have so many stories, and that there should be but one floor? Would it grieve you to hear no more of your eminence, your grace, and your lordship, nor of titles, heraldry, nobility, feudal tenure, or of the

high and low clergy!" I observed "that equality had always been the chimera of republics, and the lure that ambition offered to vanity. But this level is impossible in a vast monarchy; and that to wish to abolish all is going much farther than the nation intended, and much farther than it asked."

"As for that," replied he; "does the nation know what it wishes? Its wishes will be directed, and it will be made to say what it has never imagined; if it hesitate, it will be answered as Crispin answers the legatee: it is your lethargy. The nation is a great flock that thinks only of feeding, and that shepherds with good dogs can lead at their will. And, besides, it is its real happiness that all wish to secure unknown to itself; for, indeed, my good friend, neither your old regulations, your religion, your morality, nor all your antiquated prejudices, deserve any indulgence. They are each but a wretched disgrace to an age like ours; and, to trace a new plan, it is requisite to clear the ground completely."

"Clear the ground completely!" insisted I: "What! the throne and the altar?" "The throne and the altar," answered he, "will fall together: they are two buttresses that support each other; break but one of them, and the other gives way."

I concealed the impression which this language made on me, and to draw him on still farther, "You announce," said I, "an enterprise in which I think I see more difficulties than means."

"Believe me," replied he, "the difficulties are foreseen, and the means are calculated." He then developed himself, and I learnt that the calculations of the faction were founded on the character of the king, which was so distant from violence that it was consid-

sidered as pusillanimous; on the actual state of the clergy, which only consisted, he said, of a few virtues without talents, and a few talents disgraced and dishonored by vices; and finally on the condition of the high nobility, which was said to be degenerated, and in which few great characters supported the lustre of a great name.

The third estate ought most especially to place confidence in itself. This order, long wearied with an arbitrary authority, the tyranny of which extended to its minutest ramifications, had over the other two not only the advantage of number, but that of union, and that of courage and audacity to brave the worst. "In short," said Chamfort, "this accumulation of impatience and indignation, formed like a storm, and that storm ready to burst, confederation and insurrection everywhere declared, and, at the signal given by the province of Dauphiny, the whole kingdom ready to answer by acclamation that it demands to be free, the provinces leagued, their correspondence established, and from Paris, as from their centre, the republican spirit bearing to the distant cities its warmth and light, — such is the state of our cause. Are these vain and airy projects?"

I confessed that in speculation they were truly awful; but added that, beyond the bounds of temperate reform, the best part of the nation would suffer no innovation to be made in the laws of the country and in the fundamental principles of the monarchy.

He agreed that in the quiet circle of their families, their shops, their offices, and their manufactories, great numbers of those peaceful domestic citizens would probably find all projects too bold which might disturb their enjoyments and repose. "But if they should disapprove them," said he, "it will only be

timidly and without noise, while, to overawe and beguile them, there is that determined class which sees nothing that it can lose by change, and thinks it sees everything to be gained.

“To raise this mob, the most powerful springs of human action will not be neglected; scarcity, famine, money, reports of alarm and affright, the madness of fear and of rage, afford pictures that will be diligently presented to the view. You have heard only elegant speakers among the citizens; but be assured that all our orators of the tribune are nothing in comparison with the Demostheneses at half a crown a head, who, in the brandy-shops, the public squares, the gardens, and on the quays, announce devastation and fire, villages sacked and inundated with blood, and plots to besiege and starve Paris. These are what I call eloquent men. Besides, money and the hope of plunder are all-powerful among this description of people. We have just made a trial of it in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and you would scarcely believe how little it has cost the Duke d’Orleans to get the manufactory of that honest Reveillon sacked and pillaged, which, among this same people, insured the maintenance of a hundred families. Mirabeau ludicrously maintains that with a thousand guineas one may effect a very pretty sedition.”

“Thus,” said I, “your experiments are crimes, and your trained forces villains.” “Which is very necessary,” answered he, coolly. “What would you do with the mass of people if muzzled with your principles of honesty and justice? Virtuous men are feeble, personal, and timid; ’t is knaves only that are determined. The advantage of the people is to have no morality. How will you defend yourself against men to whom

all means are welcome? Mirabeau is right: there is not one of our old virtues that can serve us: the mob has no need of them, or it needs others of another stamp. All that is necessary to effect a revolution, all that is useful and appropriate to that purpose, is the grand principle."

"It is perhaps that of the Duke d'Orleans," replied I; "but I see no other leader for this people in insurrection, and I confess I have no very high opinion of his courage." "You are right," said he; "and Mirabeau, who knows him well, says that to reckon on him would be building on sand; but he has shown himself popular; he bears a name that imposes; he has thousands to scatter; he hates the king; he hates the queen still more; and, if he should want courage, there are those who will give it him; for even among the people there will be intrepid chiefs, above all from the moment when they shall have shown themselves rebels, and shall think themselves criminal; for there is no retreating when we see behind us no retreat but the scaffold. Fear, without hope of safety, is the true courage of the people. Our forces will be immense if the number of our accomplices be so. But," added he, "I see that which gives me hope makes you sad; you wish for no liberty that is earned by a waste of blood and treasure. Do you want to have revolutions made up for you with rose-water?"

Here our conversation ended, and we separated; he, without doubt, full of contempt for my minute scruples, and I very little satisfied with his hardy immorality. The wretch punished himself for it by self-destruction as soon as he saw his errors.

I communicated this conversation to the Abbé Maury on the evening of the same day. "It is but too true,"

said he, "that they scarcely deceive themselves in their speculations, and that to find few obstacles the faction has well chosen its time. I have observed the two parties. My resolution is fixed to perish in the breach; but I feel the sad conviction that they will take the place by assault, and that it will be abandoned to pillage."

"If that be the case," answered I, "what madness can induce the clergy and the nobility to suffer the king to engage in this contest?" "What would you have them do?" "What is done in a fire: I would have them abandon something to the flames: supply the deficit by charging themselves with the public debt; set afloat the vessel of the state; extricate the king from the rocks amid which they have themselves intricated him, and, at whatever price, persuade him to abrogate the states-general before they shall be assembled. I would wish them to be informed that they perish if the states meet, and that there is not a moment to lose in order to dissipate the storm that is ready to burst." Maury made me some objections: I would hear none. "Well," said he, "since you require it, I will take the step that you recommend, but I shall not be listened to."

Unhappily, he addressed himself to the Bishop of —, an empty-headed man, who treated my opinions as chimeras. He answered, "that things were not as they seemed to be; and that, with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other, the church would defend its rights."

Released from my deputation at the electoral assembly, I retired to the country to seek the repose I wanted; and also stole away from a new society that was forming at my house: it was composed of men

that I should have delighted to assemble together in more peaceful times. They were the Abbé de Périgord, lately become Bishop of Autun, the Count de Narbonne, and the Marquis de la Fayette. I had seen them in society, as free as myself from intrigue and care ; the first of a prudent, mild, and amiable understanding ; the second, of a lively, brilliant, and ingenuous gayety ; and the last, with a cordiality full of charm and grace ; and all three of the most engaging manners.

But, in their rendezvous at my house, I saw their tempers clouded by a tinge of politics ; and, from some expressions that escaped them, I suspected a change with which my principles did not harmonize. They perceived, as well as myself, that in their conferences and political relations my house was not a place of rendezvous for them. By my retreat we were separated.

On those days of the week when I went to the Academy I used to sleep at Paris ; and I frequently passed the evenings at M. Necker's. There, in the ministerial circle, I spoke to them with openness of heart of all I had seen and all I had heard. I found them quite stupefied, and not knowing which way to turn. What was passing at Versailles had undeceived M. Necker, and I perceived his consternation. Being invited to dine at his house with the principal deputies of the commons, I thought I could there remark, from the coldness with which they answered his politeness and attentions, that they were willing enough to have him for their steward, but not for their guide.

M. de Montmorin, to whom I spoke to engage the king to retire into one of his fortified towns, and at the head of his armies, raised as objections the want of money, bankruptcy, and civil war.



“Do you think, then,” asked he, “that the danger is so imminent as to require so sudden a recourse to extremes?” “I think it so imminent and so pressing,” said I, “that in a month from this time I would neither answer for the liberty of the king, for his life, nor for your own.”

Alas! Chamfort had made me a prophet. But I was not listened to; or rather I was heard by a weak minister, though he was not a weak man.

In the mean time the deputies of the three orders had repaired to Versailles, nearly in the number prescribed: three hundred of the order of the clergy, three hundred of the order of the nobility, and six hundred of the order of the third estate, including those of the city of Paris, who did not arrive till a few days afterward.

The opening of the assembly took place on the 5th of May. Never had the nation been so fully represented; never had its representatives been intrusted with affairs so weighty; never too had so much talent and knowledge been united to labor in concert at the great work of public utility; never, in fine, did a better and more virtuous king offer himself as a coadjutor. What happiness has a blind system of revolution destroyed!

The king, in all the splendor and pomp of majesty, accompanied by the queen and the two princes his brothers, by the princes of the blood, the peers of the realm, the officers of the crown, the keeper of the seals, and the minister of finance, repaired to the hall of the assembled states.

He appeared with simple dignity, without pride, without timidity, bearing on his countenance the character of the native goodness of his soul, and tenderly

moved by the sight and feeling which the presence of the representatives of a faithful nation should necessarily inspire in its king.

By the express order of the king, the director-general of the finances rose and exposed their actual situation ; and, without dissembling the evil, indicated its remedy. Over this picture, so alarming in shade, he spread a "cheering" light ; and, with the most afflicting avowals mixed the consolations of a courageous hope.

"In due time," said Necker, "his Majesty will justly appreciate the character of your deliberations ; and if it be such as he hopes, and such as he has a right to expect, if it be such, in short, as the soundest part of the nation asks and desires, the king will second your intentions and your labors ; he will glory in crowning them ; and the spirit of the best of princes mixing, as it were, with that which the most faithful of all nations will inspire, we shall see this happy union give birth to the greatest of blessings, the most solid of empires."

It was this language of an authority that reserved to itself examination and free consent, it was this that wounded the pride of the democratic league. Jealous of seeing the sovereign exert his own pure will where they pretended to command, they accused Necker of presenting despotism under the forms of beneficence. They wanted a king who was no longer king.

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## BOOK XV.

At the first step a dispute arose between the three orders, as had been foreseen, on the manner of forming

themselves. The first resolution of the third estate was, never to deliberate by chambers : and, of the nobility and clergy, never to deliberate by individual suffrage : a resolution which would at once have dissolved the convocation of the states, if both parties had stood firm and inflexible.

But the party of the first orders, already too feeble, weakened itself still more by taking an imprudent position. The third estate, in order to engage it to deliberate in common, began by demanding the verification of the powers of each deputy ; and it was evidently right in requiring that this examination should be made together and in common : was it not requisite to recognize each other ? What engagement would either party have formed by communicating the titles of its legation ? Would not either have still been free after this examination ? To this the first orders refused their assent. Instead of waiting for an opportune moment of taking a strong post, they thought they could dispute the ground foot to foot ; and an indiscreet difficulty in the beginning was to them a false position, in which they could not defend themselves.

A monarch, more occupied with himself than with the state, and who, jealous of his authority, would have seen that the states had met at least to restrain and to subjugate it, would have left the three orders to fatigue themselves with their debates and discord, to weary and dissolve this dangerous assembly ; but the king, who sincerely wished for the public welfare, hoping to engage the orders to co-operate with him, feared nothing so much as to see them separate and dispute ; and with the same good faith with which he had called them to his aid, he sought the means of reconciliation, pressing them by all his love to unite in concord.

The clergy accepted the king's mediation. The nobility, distrustful of the counsels of the minister, only consented to it under restrictions that were equivalent to a refusal. The third estate excused itself from replying to the king's offer, because the nobility, in modifying by certain reservations the acquiescence it appeared to give, the assent of that order no longer bore the character of conciliation. The order of the clergy felt its weakness; that of the nobility took its courage for force; the third estate was sensible of its own strength, which it used and abused.

The order of the nobility constituted itself, but kept on the defensive. That of the clergy thought it might preserve a feigned neutrality. "It waited," said Tolendal, "till there should be some conqueror, in order to choose its ally."

After this resolution of the 10th, the commons were occupied in verifying their powers. Having finished that operation, and determined that the work of national restoration might and ought to be begun without delay by the deputies present, it was resolved (June the 15th) to pursue it without interruption and without obstacle; but nevertheless, that, if the absent deputies presented themselves during the course of the session that was about to open, the assembly would receive them with joy, and would be eager after the verification of their powers, with them to share its labors. It was carefully added that the national representation should be one and indivisible; and that it should belong only to representatives legally verified and legitimately recognized to concur in the expression of the national will.

It only remained to be known what name the assembly should give itself. "The National Assembly," the

most ambitious of all, was that which it preferred (June the 17th;) and those who did not consent that the commons should usurp the title of "nation," were inscribed on a list which\* was circulated about Paris: a form of denunciation that has since been mortal to the freedom of suffrage.

Necker was now no more the minister that the state of affairs required. He had engaged the state in a strait, and among rocks from which he was wholly unable to extricate it.

At the same time he could not conceal from the king that the assembly was arrogating to itself an exorbitant power; and it was to restrain this usurped authority that, on the 20th of the month, a royal sitting sitting was proclaimed for the 22d. Till then it was ordered that the halls should be shut, and that the states should not sit, — a feeble expedient to prevent the union of a part of the clergy with the commons; for this union was threatened.

Till the royal sitting, the commons, having no decent place in which they could assemble, took the first that offered. It was a tennis-court, now rendered famous by the oath which they there took, never to be separated, and to assemble whenever the circumstances should require it, till the constitution of the kingdom and the regeneration of order should be established and confirmed on a solid basis. The government was far from being prepared to counteract these vigorous proceedings.

The sitting announced for Monday the 22d having been postponed to the following day, the assembly transferred itself from the tennis-court to the church of St. Louis, in order, no doubt, that the sanctity of the place might give a more awful character to what was going to pass there.

It was scarcely established before the doors of the sanctuary were opened, and it beheld the Archbishops of Bordeaux and Vienne, and the Bishops of Chartres and Rhodéz, enter and advance at the head of a hundred and forty-five deputies of the clergy. The commons received them with the joy of sacrificers to whom victims are led; and the people who filled the church seemed to wish, by their applauses, to render them insensible to the fate that awaited them. The body of the commons, increased by this reinforcement, was confirmed in the resolution to sit the next day.

Necker did not think proper to accompany the king thither. I ought, without approving it, to explain the motive of so strange a conduct. He had openly maintained, in council, that the union of the three chambers in one only was inevitable; and that by deferring it the state would be exposed to the greatest danger; that all must perceive that the commons were irrevocably decided not to recognize the deliberation by orders, and that the authority of the king would be uselessly compromised by an attempt to compel obedience; that, if the resistance were the same on the part of the two first orders, the result of it would either be, that the states would be held without their concurrence, or that they would be dissolved; that famine, bankruptcy, perhaps civil war, would threaten the kingdom, if the states were broken up, or were not very soon united; and, after having struck the king and the council with these alarming truths, he had induced them to adopt a declaration in which he had endeavored to respect both the royal dignity and the republican pride.

Now, it was this, above all, that had been changed in the declaration. The principle that would be most ardently contested was supposed incontestable; the

king was there made to desire all that the nobles wished, and to annul or prohibit all that displeased them.

Necker, then, having learned that his work was changed, and that the royal authority was opposed to public liberty, thought it his duty to abstain from appearing at this sitting, where his presence would have encouraged the belief that he adhered to what was done in spite of him.

The declaration was read to the assembly in the king's presence; and it was not difficult to recognize in it two incoherent characters. Had the states been willing to receive from the king a limited and mild monarchy, that the king gave. But they did not think it worthy of them to be indebted to him for so temperate a change; and, whatever the new constitution might be, which they had not yet meditated, they meant that it should be their own work, and not a donation from the king. Thus all the attention of the assembly was directed to that part of the declaration which recalled arbitrary power. The mild and feeling sentiments that were added were considered only as a bait to lure obedience, and as a weak and vain palliative for acts of despotism that the king came to exercise.

The commons were above all wounded at this conclusion of the king, when, addressing them himself, he said: —

“ You have just heard, gentlemen, the result of my dispositions and views. They are consonant with the lively desire that I feel to promote the public welfare; and if, by a fatality that is far from my thoughts, you should abandon me in so glorious an enterprise, singly I will insure the happiness of my people, singly I will consider myself as their true representative; and, knowing your instructions, knowing the perfect harmony

that exists between the general will of the nation and my beneficent intentions, I shall feel all the confidence that so rare a concord ought to inspire, and shall proceed to the goal I hope to attain with all the courage and firmness that I ought to possess. . . . Till now, it is I who do all for the welfare of my people, and it is rare perhaps that the sole ambition of a sovereign is to obtain the consent of his subjects to accept his benefits."

This tone of authority, these words "sovereign, subjects, and benefits," seemed offensive to republican ears; and when the king finished by commanding the three orders to retire to their respective chambers, the tacit resolution of the commons was not to obey. Thus all the fruit of the king's good-will was lost, and discord increased in a sitting, the intent of which was that it should be stifled.

When the sitting was over, the commons with a respectful but gloomy silence, suffered the order of the nobility to accompany the king, while they themselves remained in the hall, which from that moment was theirs. This they were ordered in the name of the king to quit in vain. There, instantly and on the spot, it was resolved to persist in their preceding decisions; and this resolution was carried with one general voice. At the same time they decreed, that the persons of the deputies should be inviolable, that no one of them, for what he should have said or done in that assembly, could be prosecuted, arrested, or detained, by the executive power, neither during nor after the session: and this decree declared the authors, instigators, or agents of such crimes to be infamous, and traitors to their country. It was added, that, during the session, the persons of the deputies should be secure from all crimi-



nal and civil prosecution, unless the assembly annulled the exemption. This motion was made by Mirabeau, a man more interested than any other in placing a barrier between the laws and himself.

A numerous crowd of the people, sent from Paris to Versailles, had surrounded the hall of the states during the royal sitting. It still encompassed the assembly, when it was informed that Necker was going to resign. This report was well founded.

The king, struck with astonishment at not seeing in his suite the minister of his finances, and still more surprised at not finding him in the palace on his return, had anxiously inquired of Montmorin whether Necker had determined to leave him ; and, Montmorin having hinted that he believed so, the king had charged him to go and tell Necker that he expected him.

It was at seven o'clock in the evening, at the moment when Necker was alone with the king, that the people thronged in crowds into the courts and interior of the palace, crying out that the king was deceived, and that the nation asked him to have Necker back again.

The conversation of the king with his minister lasted a whole hour. The people awaited the issue of it. At length the inhuman crowd saw the king go off to Trianon without saluting him with that cry of *vive le roi* which he so well deserved ; and the instant afterwards they saw Necker come down the staircase and get into his chair. It was for him that vows and benedictions then burst forth.

Necker wished to make them understand that singly he had no longer the power to effect any good. " We will aid you," cried Target, assuming the right of speaking in the name of all ; " and for that purpose there are no efforts, no sacrifices, that we are not dis-

posed to make." "Sir," said Mirabeau to him, with the mask of frankness, "I do not like you, but I bow to virtue." "Stay, M. Necker," cried the crowd; "we conjure you, stay!" The minister, deeply affected, "Speak for me, M. Target," said he, "for I cannot speak for myself." "Well, gentlemen, I stay," cried Target; "this is M. Necker's answer." It has since been known how sensibly the heart of the king was wounded by this scene, which was in part the intention of the actors.

There was no hope of breaking the union of the commons, nor of conquering their resistance. They every day received from the different cities of the kingdom bespoken felicitations on their courageous firmness. In these addresses it was said, that, if snares should be laid around the national assembly, it had only to turn its head, and it would perceive behind it twenty-five millions of Frenchmen, who, with their eyes fixed on its decisions, awaited in silence to learn their own fate, and that of their posterity. It could not be expected that a party thus declared would either recede or bend.

In the other party resolution was far from being thus unanimous, or resistance equally firm. You have seen the division that took place in the order of the clergy. That of the nobility was scarcely more sure of itself; sixty deputies of this order had openly disavowed in their chamber the refusal that had been given to the king's meditation. It was to him that they yielded; and that day (the 27th of June) was marked by the reunion of the three orders in the common hall of the states-general.

This solemn meeting took place at first amid profound silence. But, when it was completed, this respectful silence was suddenly succeeded by an explosion

of joy that quickly spread and communicated itself without.

The people, still susceptible of honorable and kind emotions, have just learned that their triumph is the king's work; and, doubly happy to obtain and owe it to him, press towards that palace, whither a few days before they had been borne by their alarms. They now make it resound with the vow that is dearest to Frenchmen. They ask to see the good king, to show him how he deserves to be loved, and to make him witness the transports he causes.

The king appears on the balcony of his apartment, the queen is by his side; and both hear their names resound to the sky. Kindred tears mix with their embraces, and, by an impulse at which all hearts are moved, the queen presses in her arms the object of their gratitude. Then this people, that since have shown themselves so cruel, and that were still essentially good (I love to repeat it), seized that instant to recompense the queen for her feelings as a wife, by gratifying those of a mother. They ask to see her son. They ask to see the dauphin. That precious and feeble child, borne in the arms of the queen, is presented by maternal love to national tenderness. Happy that he was not destined to live long enough to see what would be the changes of this deceitful favor.

The orators of the people made perpetual eulogies on the people's goodness and natural equity; and these eulogies were without doubt due to that class of citizens which is composed of the better order of the people. But, below that class, who did not see those villains who in Paris had lately sacked the house of a peaceful and good citizen? And those who in the gardens of the Palais-Royal sowed calumny and

breathed revolt? And those who at Versailles would stone a pious and charitable archbishop? And those who, having rescued a parricide from death, had borne him away from punishment? And those who since, in Paris at the doors of the Hôtel de Ville, and at Versailles even in the palace of the king, have committed so many atrocities? And those who have applauded after having provoked them, and have rejoiced to see the heads of those so inhumanly massacred carried about on pikes?

It was therefore, said the two orders that claimed common safety, a most cruel derision, thus to confound the part of the people whom it was requisite to curb with that portion which ought to be protected. By a gross abuse of words, the populace was called the people, and this people the nation, which was declared sovereign.

The police of Paris demanded a guard of citizens. But, till this guard was organized, what anxiety could the small number of troops excite which the king had marched there? All was tranquil there since they arrived. But this military police did not suit the taste of the commons. Their emissaries did not cease to agitate the Palais-Royal, that infamous resort of crime: thither they allured the soldiers of the guards, and detained them all night. This is what the Duke du Châtelet, their colonel, could not endure: he ordered two of these vagabond soldiers to be arrested there at an undue hour; and they were led to the prison of the Abbaye. This was the signal for insurrection. The most common act of military authority was treated as a foul attack on liberty, and in less than an hour the prison of the two soldiers (who were called the friends of the people) was besieged by twenty thousand men.

The jailers having resisted, axes and levers were quickly procured, the doors were forced open, and all the prisoners, even the criminals, escaped during the night.

The next day, at the opening of the national assembly, the deputies of this mutinous crowd arrived at Versailles. In their address, which was delivered to the president, it was said that those two unhappy victims of despotism had been torn from their irons; that amid loud acclamations they had been brought back to the Palais-Royal, where they were under the guard of the people, who had become responsible for them. "We await," added they, "your answer, to restore peace to our fellow-citizens, and freedom to our brothers."

The president's answer was that, by invoking the king's clemency, the assembly would give an example of that respect which was due to the royal authority, and that it conjured the inhabitants of Paris to revert instantly to peace and order. This feeble answer was at least sincere and conformable to the will of the commons; for the assembly did not know that the populace was urged to rebel by the most distinguished and most infamous villains, and that the madness which they infused was employed by these leaders to inspire the court with a dread of insurrection. The assembly itself was put in action by springs that were unknown to itself. In its name, and by its authority, the revolutionary faction agitated the people, and by them this same faction governed the assembly. Such has been the mechanism of the revolution.

The king was entreated, in the name of the assembly, to be pleased to employ for the re-establishment of order those infallible means of clemency and goodness which were natural to his heart; and he willingly

consented. But, before he yielded to an impulse of kindness, he wished that order should be re-established. This was by no means done. The people, without recommitting the two soldiers to their prison, without renouncing its turbulent nocturnal meetings, and in redoubling, on the contrary, both its wildness and its violence, demanded the king's promise in a tone that would suffer no delay; and discipline and royal authority were obliged to bend to its will.

It was then that the decisions of the council appeared to assume some energy; but weakness never wholly quits its character; it totters when it attempts to rise, and falls back again more timid after a useless effort.

The king was persuaded that, in displaying to the people a military power, he should only repress and subject force by force, and should leave public liberty protected and uninjured.

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## BOOK XVI.

THE king then ordered some troops to advance; but, while forming a vigorous resolution, the ministers should have foreseen its consequences, calculated step by step the forces and resistances, the difficulties and the dangers, and determined beforehand their march and their positions as events might direct. They calculated nothing, they provided for nothing, they did not even think of securing the troops from the corruption of the populace of Paris. They took no precaution to shelter the king and his family from insult, in case of revolt; and in the faubourgs of Paris, the only commanding post, the Bastile, was furnished

neither with a sufficient garrison nor with provisions to supply the few soldiers who were there. In short, the very maintenance of the troops that were assembled was neglected to such a degree, that their bread was made with damaged corn, while the women of the populace came to offer them some that was excellent, with wine and meat in abundance, not to mention their other means of corruption.

To this species of stupor, into which the court and the council had fallen, the adverse party opposed a measured, progressive, and constant march, proceeding from post to post towards dominion, without ever losing a moment or retreating a step. Resolved, then, to suffer no collection of troops either round Paris or Versailles, this party determined on an address to the king (the 8th of July, 1789). It was the work of Mirabeau.

This speech, so insolently flattering, this eloquent menace of a general insurrection if the king, for the safety of the good and the terror of the wicked, kept a part of his armies near him, if he did not abandon his capital to all the excesses of license and robbery, and the national assembly to the insults and threats of an insurgent populace; this affectation of including mutinous and revolted vagabonds in the praises of a good people; this arrogant caution that the king's welfare depended on his submission and compliance; and the formal declaration that this was the only empire he would henceforth be able to exercise, did not produce that effect on the mind of the king which the party expected. Through these respectful threats and hypocritical alarms, he saw too well that the real question was, whether he should abandon or maintain his legitimate authority; and that he was only exhorted to suffer himself to be disarmed and bound: he saw above

all that in touching lightly on his good intentions, those facts were carefully omitted which rendered just and necessary the precautions he had taken. It was therefore requisite that he should explain himself; and to this language, full of artifice, he answered by reasons equally forcible and candid.

"No one," said he to the deputies, "is ignorant of the tumultuous and scandalous scenes that have passed and been renewed at Paris and Versailles, under my own eye and in the presence of the states-general. It is necessary I should make use of the means that are in my power, in order to restore and maintain order in the capital and the neighborhood. To watch over the public safety is one of my principal duties. These are the motives which have engaged me to collect some troops around Paris. You may assure the states-general that they are only destined to repress, or rather to prevent a repetition of these tumults, to maintain the exercise of the laws, to secure and protect the liberty that should reign in your deliberations. Every species of restraint should be banished from them, and all apprehension of disorder or violence removed. None but evil-minded men could mislead my people on the true motives of the precautions I am taking. I have constantly studied to do all that could contribute to my people's happiness, and I have always had reason to feel secure of their fidelity and love.

"If, however, the necessary presence of the troops in the neighborhood of Paris still cause some umbrage, I shall be willing, on the demand of the assembly, to transfer the states-general to Noyon or to Soissons, and I would then repair to Compiègne."

This is what he was very sure that they would not ask. The popular party was careful not to quit its



post. It needed the support of the populace ; it was by agitating the mob that it rendered itself potent and formidable. It answered therefore, by its organ, Mirabeau, that " it belonged to the troops to remove from the assembly, and not to the assembly to remove from the troops. We have petitioned," said he, " for the removal of the army, and not of ourselves."

It was just, however, that the king should preserve at least a power of resistance. In the most temperate monarchies, the king has the right of the veto ; and the necessity of the royal sanction, in order to give to the decrees of the deputies of the people the form and the force of laws, has never been doubted. Now, if this right of examining and sanctioning the laws, of giving his consent to them or of interposing his veto, were unacknowledged, contested, refused ; if the monarch saw his legitimate authority half torn from him ; if he beheld his throne shaken, his crown despised, the sceptre of his fathers ready to break in his hands, ought he not to arm to defend them ? would it not be just, even in the eyes of the nation, that he should teach the commons to confine themselves within the bounds marked out for them in the instructions they received from their constituents ?

These questions were agitated in the council, and alarmed the ministers.

" Every act of rigor," said they, " would be a step equally fatal ; whether it should be requisite to support or to abandon it, it would be an hostility contrary to the feelings of the king, which might light up between his people and him the fires of civil war, and render odious the very power that it should have made formidable, or which would be disgraced if it suffered itself to be braved."

Placed between two rocks, in a strait where either the royal authority or what was called public liberty was hastening to its end, having neither sufficient credit nor sufficient influence to save both, they employed with the king all the means of dissuasion which his esteem and their zeal afforded them: they showed him only imprudence and peril in their assembling discontented and corruptible troops, of which he thought himself secure.

You may conceive what must have been the perplexity of this prince. But everything warned him that it was time to adopt a system of firm conduct, and this new system required new ministers.

The dismissal of the present ones was resolved on upon the 11th of July.

On the morning of the 12th the news had reached Paris; but it was not made public till the evening at the theatres. A sullen indignation then seized on the public mind. It was concluded that the resolution of acting with open force had been formed at court without the knowledge of the king, and that the enemies of the people, by removing sage and moderate men from his counsels, were determined in spite of his resistance to draw him to their purpose. The dismissal of Necker, above all, in the critical state in which the kingdom was, appeared to be a proof that they wanted to ruin and to starve Paris. At every theatre the representation was instantly interrupted. Men wild with alarm came and cried out to the actors: "Leave off! withdraw! the kingdom is in mourning! Paris is threatened, our enemies prevail. Necker is no longer in place, he is dismissed, he is gone, and with him are dismissed all the ministers who were the friends of the people!"

A sudden affright is spread throughout the theatres, the actors disappear, the spectators retire trembling and dismayed ; and the resolution is already formed through the whole city to demand that Necker, and all the good ministers who are of the same sentiments, may be restored to the state.

In every place where parties of the people usually assemble on festivals, the fermentation was extreme. The Palais-Royal was filled with a tumultuous crowd, agitated like the waves of the sea in a violent storm. At first a mournful and continued murmur dwelt on the ear, and soon a threatening rumor more fearfully spread. The people took the green cockade ; leaves of trees were substituted for it ; and, as a signal for insurrection, the populace, having entered the shop of a maker of wax models, took the busts of Necker and the Duke d'Orleans, and carried them about Paris.

Another crowd assembled in the square of Louis XV., and the tumult continued to increase. To dissipate it, some troops were ordered to advance. Their commander, the Baron de Bezenval, had repaired thither with a company of grenadiers of the Swiss guards. The Prince de Lambesc came and joined him at the head of fifty dragoons of the royal German corps. The presence of the troops completed the irritation of the people. All began to insult them. The troops were careless of these clamors ; but, assailed with stones, by which some of them were wounded, the dragoons were losing all patience, when Bezenval gave orders to the Prince de Lambesc to advance in order to force the people to fall back into the Tuileries. This order was executed with so much caution, that not a man of the people was either beaten down or bruised. It was not till the dragoons were retiring that a madman, who

obstinately persisted in shutting the Pont Tournant against the prince, was slightly wounded by him.

Throughout Paris the report was instantly spread of a massacre of the citizens in the garden of the Tuileries, where, it was said, the dragoons of Lambesc were riding in among the crowd with drawn swords, and the colonel at their head, murdering old men, crushing children, beating down pregnant women, or making them miscarry with affright.

At the same time, on the false report that their regiment was insulted, the grenadiers of the French guards forced the Duke du Châtelet, their colonel, to let them escape from the garden of the Hôtel de Richelieu, where he kept them confined. From that time the regiment of guards was entirely devoted to the people; and that was what the factious most ardently desired.

Thus Paris, without courts of justice, without police, without a guard, at the mercy of one hundred thousand men wandering wildly in the middle of the night, and for the most part wanting bread, believed itself on the point of being besieged from without and pillaged from within. Twenty-five thousand soldiers were posted around its walls, at St. Denis, at Courbevoye, at Charanton, at Sèvres, at La Muette, in the Champ-de-Mars; and while they should blockade it, and cut off all supplies of provisions, it would be a prey to a starving people. Such was the terrible picture which, in the night between the 12th and 13th of July, was present to every fancy.

But the insurgents themselves, seized with the common terror, committed no pillage. The armorers' shops were the only ones they forced, and they there took only arms. As soon as it was day, the city was filled with a tumultuous populace, that, knocking at every door,

asked with loud cries for arms and bread, and that, believing there was a magazine of muskets and swords under the town-hall, flocked thither in order to force it. I stop to explain by whom the town-hall was at that moment occupied, and by what species of tribunal the police was there exercised.

On the 10th of May, the elections of the city being completed, Target, the president of the assembly of the electors, persuaded them to sit permanently during the session of the states-general. A resolution was taken to that effect with the consent and approbation of the popular faction. Thus, when at the end of June, after the royal sitting, the electors found their hall shut at the archbishop's palace, they procured admittance into the town-hall, and established themselves there the agents of the national assembly to the people of Paris.

I ought to render them this testimony, that, in circumstances of difficulty and danger, charged with the care of the public safety, they acquitted themselves in their functions like good and brave citizens.

It was to this assembly then, that, on the 13th of July, the assembled crowds addressed themselves to ask for arms, of which, they said, there were abundance in the vaults of the hall. But as this magazine did not exist, the people forced the doors in vain; the muskets of the guard were all that were found there, and they were carried off.

In the mean time the alarm-bell was rung in every church, and the districts assembled to decide on the means of providing for the safety of the city both within and without; for it was not less urgent to defend it against the villains with which it swarmed than against the troops that encircled it. From this moment the citizens formed bands of volunteers, who came and drew

up by common consent in the squares and public gardens. But arms were still wanted, and still incessantly demanded at the town-hall. The mayor, the unfortunate Flesselles, is sent for; he arrives there through the crowd, calls himself the father of the people, and is applauded on that very spot where to-morrow his bleeding body will be dragged and torn.

The electors appoint a permanent committee at the town-hall, to be there accessible night and day to this people so tortured with affright. Flesselles, at the head of the committee, imprudently announces that he expects ten thousand muskets from Charleville, and thirty thousand soon afterwards. He had even, as it is said, the fatal levity to trifle with the most impatient, by sending them here and there to places where he made them believe they would find arms. They hastened to the search, saw they were deceived, and returned to denounce him to the people as an impostor who, in betraying, insulted them.

The committee of the electors, in order to hearten the people, resolved that a Parisian army should be immediately formed, to the number of forty-eight thousand men. All the districts came to offer themselves to compose it on the same day. The green cockade was laid aside, and the red and blue took its place; (green was the color of a prince who was not a republican.)

In the mean time the people had gone to the *garde-meuble*, and had carried away the precious arms that were preserved there as curiosities, either for the beauty of the workmanship, with which they were enriched, or for their antiquity, and out of respect for the heroes whose glory they recalled. The sword of Henry IV. was the booty of a vagabond.

But for so many thousand men this small number of arms was a feeble resource. They returned furious to the town-hall, still demanding arms, saying that there were some, and accusing the electors of conniving with the enemies of the people, in order to leave Paris without defence. Pressed by these reproaches, which were accompanied by threats, the committee conceived the idea of authorizing all the districts to get pikes and other arms of that kind made, and the people were satisfied.

But a better expedient, which the districts themselves conceived and adopted, was to send in the evening to Les Invalides, and summon the governor Sombreuil to deliver to them the arms which they knew were deposited in the hotel. The commander-general of the troops, who had a camp very near there, and to whom Sombreuil addressed them, demanded time to send to Versailles for the king's orders; and that time was granted him.

The terror of the following night, more deep and more pensive, took a mournful character; the gates of the city were shut and guarded; patrols, already formed, kept the vagabonds in awe. Fires kindled in the streets inspired fear, intimidated crime, and showed everywhere knots of the people wandering like spectres. This stern and dismal silence was only broken by the stifled and terrible voice of those who, from door to door, cried out, "Arms and bread!"

In the Faubourg Saint-Laurent, the house of the monks of Saint-Lazare was set on fire and sacked. The incendiaries expected to find there a magazine of corn.

In the mean time, the Palais-Royal was full of those mercenary conspirators, who were employed to stir the

fire of sedition ; and the night passed there in accusations and atrocious motions, not only against Flesselles, but against the committee of the electors, who were denounced as traitors to the country.

On the day before, five thousand weight of powder, which was leaving Paris, had been seized at the gates, and deposited at the town-hall, under the chamber of the electors. In the middle of the night the few persons who remain on watch in this chamber are informed that, from the side of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, fifteen thousand men, the confidential band of the leaders of the Palais-Royal, are coming to force the town-hall. Among the number on watch was a citizen, Le Grand de Saint-Réné, a man of a feeble and sickly constitution, but of a firm and strong courage. "Let them come and attack us," said he, "we'll be blown up together." He immediately ordered the guards of the hall to bring six barrels of powder into the adjoining room. His resolution was known. The first barrel that was brought made the most intrepid turn pale, and the people withdrew. Thus by one single man the town-hall was preserved. The kingdom, too, would have been saved in the same manner, if the king had had such men at the head of his councils and his camps. But he himself recommended them to spare the people, and never could consent to any act of vigor and severity against his subjects ; a virtuous weakness, that has brought his head under the axe of the executioner.

During this frightful night the citizens kept themselves locked in their houses, each trembling at home for himself and for those that were dearest to him. But on the 14th, in the morning, these personal fears yielding to public alarm, the whole city was but one and the same people : Paris had an army ; this army, spon-



taneously assembled in haste, was yet ill acquainted with the rules of discipline; but public spirit supplied them. Single, it commanded everything like an invisible power. What gave this great character to public spirit, was the address that had been employed to fascinate opinion. The best citizens, seeing in the troops that came to protect Paris only enemies, who would carry fire and sword within its walls, all imagined that they had to combat for their homes, their wives, and children. The necessity, the peril, the care of the common safety and defence, the resolution of perishing, or of saving what they had most dear on earth, alone occupied every mind; and formed of all tempers and all wills that surprising accord, which, of an immense and violently agitated city, made an army obedient to the intention of all, without receiving an order from any one; so that every one could at once obey, where no one commanded.

Firearms and powder were still wanting to this army; and the committee of the city having protested anew that none had been found even at the arsenal, the people returned to Les Invalides. The order that Sombreuil expected from Versailles did not arrive. The people prepared to employ force; and such was the irresolution of the court, or rather such was the repugnance of the king to every species of violence, that in the Champ-de-Mars, at a few paces from the hotel which they came to force open, the troops received no orders to defend it. Without choosing to yield anything, the government abandoned everything; a sure way of losing all with disgrace.

It was then under the eye of six Swiss battalions, and of eight hundred horse, as well dragoons as hussars, all motionless in their camp, that the Hôtel des

Invalides was opened to the people ; a very positive proof, as Bezenval has since affirmed it to be, that the troops were forbidden to fire on the citizens ; and there was the great advantage of the people, that the king would only suffer them to be curbed, without ever consenting that they should either be treated as enemies or as rebels. This same order was observed throughout Paris, at the barriers, on the ramparts, and in the square of Louis XV. This, too, was what, in every post around, rendered the troops accessible to corruption, by the facility with which they were allowed to mix with the people.

This people, men and women, accosted the soldier, and with the glass in their hand presented to him the lures of joyous licentiousness. "What!" said they, "do you come to make war upon us? Do you come to spill our blood? Would you have the courage to draw your sword against your brothers, to fire upon your friends? Are you not Frenchmen and citizens like ourselves? Are you not, like us, the children of the people that ask only to be free, and to be no longer oppressed? You serve the king, you love him; and we too love our good king and are ready to serve him. He is not the enemy of his people; but he is deceived, and you are commanded in his name to do what he does not approve. You serve not him, but that unjust nobility, that nobility that dishonors you by treating you like slaves. Come, brave soldiers, come and revenge yourselves for a servitude that disgraces you. The king and liberty! down with the aristocrats, our oppressors and your tyrants!"

The soldier, naturally the friend of the people, was not deaf to this language. He saw but one step to take from poverty to abundance, from constraint to liberty.

A great number deserted ; and, being so near Paris, it was impossible that they should not be corrupted.

The people then, in the presence of the troops of the Champ-de-Mars, ransacked with full license the Hôtel des Invalides. Twenty-eight thousand muskets were found there in the vaults of the dome ; and with this booty, and the cannon of the esplanade drawn through Paris in triumph, the conquerors returned to the town-hall. There they learned that the governor of the Bastile, the Marquis de Launay, summoned in his turn to furnish arms and ammunition, had answered that he had none. A general cry was instantly heard from every corner of the square, " Let's go and attack the Bastile."

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## BOOK XVII.

THIS resolution appeared to be sudden and unexpected among the people ; but it was premeditated in the council of the chiefs of the revolution. The Bastile, as a state prison, had always been odious on account of the iniquitous use to which the despotism of ministers had applied it under preceding reigns ; and, as a fortress, it was formidable, particularly to those populous and mutinous faubourgs which its walls commanded, and which, in their riots, saw themselves under the fire of the cannon of its towers. To agitate these multitudes at its will, and make them act boldly, the republican faction then ardently desired that they might be rid of this overawing object. Honest men, even the most peaceful and most enlightened, wished too that the Bastile might be destroyed, because they hated the despotism of which it was the bulwark ; and

in this wish they consulted their personal security more than their real safety ; for the despotism of license is a thousand times more dreadful than that of authority, and the unbridled populace is the most cruel of tyrants. The Bastille then should not have been destroyed, but its keys should have been deposited in the sanctuary of the laws.

The court thought it impregnable ; it would have been so, or its attack and siege would have cost rivers of blood, if it had been defended ; but the man to whom the guard of it was confided, the Marquis de Launay, would not, or dared not, or could not, use the means he had of rendering its resistance inhuman ; and the populace, that so vilely assassinated him, owed him thanks and praises.

De Launay had expected to intimidate the crowd ; but it is evident that he wished to spare them. He had fifteen pieces of cannon on the towers ; and, whatever calumny may have said to palliate the crime of his assassination, not one single cannon-shot was fired from those towers. There were besides, in the interior of the castle, three cannon loaded with canister shot, pointed in front of the drawbridge. These would have made great slaughter at the moment when the people came pouring in crowds into the first court ; he fired but one, and that but once. He was provided with firearms of every kind, with six hundred muskets, twelve rampart muskets carrying balls of a pound and a half, and four hundred "biscaïens." He had procured from the arsenal abundance of ammunition, bullets, fifteen thousand cartridges, and twenty thousand pounds of powder. In fine, he had collected on the two towers of the drawbridge a mass of stones and broken iron, in order to crush the besiegers if

they should advance to the foot of the walls. But, in all these preparations to sustain a siege, he had forgotten provisions ; and, shut up in his castle with eighty invalids, thirty-two Swiss soldiers, and his staff, all the store he had on the day of the attack consisted of two sacks of flour and a little rice ; a proof that all the rest was only to inspire terror.

The small number of the Swiss soldiers that had been sent to him were sure men, and well disposed to defend themselves ; the invalids were not so, and he must have known that ; but at least he ought not to have exposed them to the fear of dying for hunger. Unequal to his situation, and in that stupor with which the presence of danger strikes a weak mind, he looked on it with a steadfast but troubled eye ; and rather motionless with astonishment than resolution. Unhappily, not a man in the council supplied the foresight he wanted.

To intoxicate the people with this first success, the attack and capture of the Bastile have been extravagantly extolled as an exploit. The following is the account of this conquest, which I have learned from the very mouth of him who was proclaimed and borne in triumph as the conductor of the enterprise, and as its hero.

“The Bastile,” said the brave Elie to me, “was not forcibly taken. It surrendered even before it was attacked. It surrendered on the promise I gave, upon the honor of a French officer, and on the part of the people, that not a man should be hurt if the fortress surrendered.” This is the simple fact, such as Elie attests it to me. The following details of it are written as he dictates.

The fore-courts of the Bastile had been abandoned. Some determined men having dared to break the draw-

bridge, which barred the entrance into the first court, the people rushed in there in crowds; and, deaf to the voice of the soldiers, who from the tops of the towers forbore to fire on them, and called out to them to retire, they persisted in advancing towards the walls of the castle. It was then that they were fired upon by the soldiers; and, being put to flight, they saved themselves under the covert of the fore-courts. One killed, and a few wounded, spread terror even to the town-hall; multitudes came to demand urgently in the name of the people that deputations might be resorted to, in order to stop the carnage. Two of these deputations arrived, one by the arsenal, and the other by the side of the Faubourg Saint Antoine. "Advance," cried the invalids to them from the top of the towers, "we will not fire on you; advance with your flag. The governor is going down, the castle bridge will be let down in order to introduce you, and we will give hostages." The white flag was already hoisted on the towers, and the soldiers held their arms inverted in sign of peace. But neither of the deputations dared to advance so far as the last fore-court. At the same time the crowd was pressing towards the drawbridge, and firing from all sides. The besieged then had reason to think that these appearances of deputation were but a trick to surprise them; and, after having cried in vain to the people not to advance, they found themselves obliged to fire in their turn.

The people, repulsed a second time, and furious at seeing some of their own body fall under the fire of the fortress, took that revenge in which it usually indulges. The barracks and shops of the fore-court were pillaged; the house of the governor was delivered to the flames. The firing of one cannon, loaded with case shot, and a

discharge of musketry, had driven back this crowd of robbers and incendiaries ; when, at the head of a dozen brave citizens, Elie, advancing to the very edge of the ditch, cried out to the besieged to surrender, promising that not a man should be hurt. He then perceived a hand extended through an opening in a part of the drawbridge and presenting to him a note. This note was received by means of a plank that was held over the ditch ; it was written in these words : " We have twenty thousand pounds of powder. We will blow up the castle if you do not accept our capitulation. Signed, De Launay."

Elie, after having read the note, cried out that he accepted it ; and on the part of the fort, all hostilities ceased. However, De Launay, before he gave himself up to the people, wished that the capitulation should be ratified and signed at the town-hall, and that to secure his own safety and that of his soldiers, an imposing guard should receive and protect them. But the unfortunate invalids, thinking to hasten their deliverance, did violence to the governor, by crying out from the court, " The Bastile surrenders."

It was then that De Launay, seizing the match of a cannon, threatened to go and set fire to the powder-magazine ; and he was perhaps firmly resolved to do so. The sentinels, who guarded that magazine, presented their bayonets ; and, in spite of himself, without further precaution or delay, he saw himself forced to surrender.

The little drawbridge of the fort being first opened, Elie entered with his companions, all brave and honorable men, and fully determined to keep his word. On seeing him, the governor went to him, embraced him, and presented him his sword, with the keys of the Bastile.

"I refused his sword," said Elie to me, "and took only the keys." His companions received the staff and the officers of the garrison with the same cordiality, swearing to serve them as a guard and defence; but they swore in vain.

As soon as the great bridge was let down (and it is not known by what hand that was done) the people rushed into the court of the castle, and, full of fury, seized on the troop of invalids. The Swiss, who were dressed only in linen frocks, escaped among the crowd; all the rest were arrested. Elie, and the honest men who had entered first with him, exerted all their efforts to tear from the hands of the people the victims which they themselves had delivered up. But ferocity was obstinately attached to its prey. Several of these soldiers, whose lives had been promised them, were assassinated; others were dragged like slaves through the streets of Paris. Twenty-two were brought to the Grève, and, after humiliations and inhuman treatment, they had the affliction of seeing two of their comrades hanged. When they were presented at the town-hall, a furious madman said to them: "You have fired on your fellow-citizens; you deserve to be hanged; and you shall be so presently." Fortunately, the French guards interceded for their pardon; the people suffered itself to be persuaded. But it was without pity for the officers of the garrison. De Launay, torn from the arms of those who wished to save him, had his head cut off under the walls of the town-hall. In the midst of his assassins, he defended his life with the bravery of despair; but he fell under their number. Delorme Salbray, his major, was murdered in the same manner. The adjutant Mirai had been so, near the Bastille. Pernon, an old lieutenant of the Invalids, was assas-



sinated on the wharf Saint Paul, as he was going to the hall. Another lieutenant, Caron, was covered with wounds. The head of the Marquis de Launay was carried about Paris by this same populace that he might have crushed had he not been moved to pity.

Such were the exploits of those who have since been called the heroes and conquerors of the Bastile. On the 14th of July, 1789, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the people had assembled before it; at forty minutes after four it had surrendered. At half an hour after six the head of the governor was carried in triumph to the Palais-Royal. Among the number of conquerors, which has been said to amount to eight hundred, many people have been mentioned who had not even approached the castle.

The people, after this conquest, intoxicated by power newly acquired, perpetually fed with suspicion and anxiety, and rendered more savage because it still shuddered at the dangers it had run, now showed only the character of a jealous and cruel tyrant. Government ought to have known, that for the people there was no barrier between license and crime but the fear of punishment, and in a time of trouble and sedition the defence of the Bastile was an object of the highest importance to public tranquillity. You have just seen to what excess it had been neglected. Neither Broglie, a minister and general, nor the king's council, nor the party of the nobles, — no one had thought of inquiring whether its garrison was secure and sufficient, whether it was supplied with provisions, or whether the commander was a man of a sufficiently cool and determined courage. They had either supposed it useless or unattackable, or rather they seemed to have forgotten it.

It is nevertheless true, that if De Launay had made

use of his artillery, he would have struck Paris with awe. He recollected, without doubt, that he served a good king ; and among the people every man knew it as well as he.

Paris, at the moment of the attack, had hastened towards the Bastile. Sexes and ages, all were confounded around these ramparts that were loaded with cannon. What was it then inspired them ? The king consents that his people should be threatened, but he will not consent that his people should be crushed. What a fatal lesson has been given to kings by the example of this !

In the evening the assembled crowds, thirsting for more blood, demand the head of Flesselles, who, in the morning, they said, had refused them arms, and who, in connivance with the court, had betrayed, deceived, and trifled with them most insolently ; and the Grève and the town-hall resounded with these clamors. But the hotbed of fermentation and popular rage was not the Grève, it was the district of St. Roch, the quarter of the Palais-Royal ; it was there that Flesselles had been proscribed.

During the attack of the Bastile, this unfortunate man had attended at the committee of the town-hall, assailed by a troop of wretches, who loaded him with insult and announced his death. After two hours of silence and torture, he had resolved to go from the chamber of the committee into the great chamber, to demand of the people that he might be heard and tried by the general assembly of the electors, tired of life, and wishing rather to die than suffer so cruel an agony. And, indeed, by thus throwing himself into a pitiless crowd, he delivered himself to certain death. He went there, and took his seat in the circle of the electors.

He saw himself aimed at from every side. But other incidents having diverted the fury of which he was the object, he profited by that interval, and leaning towards an ecclesiastic who was near him (it was the Abbé Fauchet), he took him by the hand, conjuring him in a low voice to hasten instantly to the district St. Roch. "It is there that my head is demanded," added he; "there spring all the accusations that are brought against me. Go and tell them that I only ask time to justify myself." Fauchet, moved by a sentiment of compassion for him, went to implore this grace, but implored it in vain. The object was to overawe those who, like Flesselles, might think themselves by duty attached to the king's party; and, in order to conquer probity by terror, more victims were requisite. The people was not yet sufficiently habituated to crime, and in order to train it to murder, its leaders wanted to exercise it. The district that conducted the insurrection was therefore inexorable, and Flesselles never again saw the man from whom he expected his deliverance.

Here I ought to observe to you what those were who were sent to the town-hall to demand the head of Flesselles. "They were," says a faithful witness, "men armed like savages. And what men? — creatures such as no man ever remembered to have met in open day. Where did they come from? Who had drawn them from their dark retreats?"

"At the head of the committee of the electors," says the same witness, "Flesselles still showed some boldness; till the fatal moment, he was listening with an air of interest and affability so natural that he would have saved himself by it, if the resolution of destroying him had not been irrevocably taken. He witnessed the

ferocious joy that was loudly manifested at the sight of that lance which bore the head of the governor of the Bastile. He witnessed the efforts made, in those cruel moments, by a few good citizens to tear from the people some of its victims. He heard the cries of those who demanded that he himself should be delivered up to them. Yet, amid so many horrors, hazarding all in order to escape, and thinking himself for a moment forgotten, he dared to quit his place and slide in among the crowd. He had indeed penetrated it; but those who had pursued him into that chamber, and who, without doubt, had promised his death, pursued him still, crying out to him, 'To the Palais-Royal! to the Palais-Royal!' 'With all my heart,' said he to them as he went out. And the moment afterwards, on the staircase of the town-hall, one of these villains fractured his head with a pistol-shot. This head too was carried about Paris in triumph, and this triumph was applauded. It was the same with the murder of the invalid soldiers, who were torn to pieces in the streets: so completely had the delirium of rage stifled every feeling of humanity."

"I have remarked," adds my witness, using an expression of Tacitus, "that if among the people few men then dared crime, many wished and all suffered it. Those wretches were not of the nation,—those villains that filled the town-hall; some were almost naked, and others strangely dressed in clothes of different colors, mad, and for the most part not knowing what they wanted, or demanding the death of those who were proscribed and marked out to them, and demanding it in a tone which it more than once appeared impossible to resist."

If the national assembly could have had any presen-

minent of the evils with which the kingdom was threatened by this dreadful anarchy ; if it had foreseen how impotent its own efforts would be to force back within the bounds of legitimate authority this ferocious beast which it was eager to unchain ; if those who flattered it had thought that they themselves might perhaps one day become its prey, they would have shuddered with a salutary fear. But, to give to themselves a reigning authority, they only thought of disarming that which alone could have saved the whole.

The citizens of Paris, blinded as they were respecting their true interests, abandoned themselves to the transports of an extravagant joy, when it was decided that the Bastille should be destroyed. The people, under the reign of Louis XI., would not have expressed more joy to see the iron cages broken. History, however, will render this testimony to the memory of Louis XVI., that of seven prisoners who were found in the Bastille, not one had been sent there under his reign.

While the city of Paris loudly declared itself in insurrection against the royal authority, the instigators of the rebellion triumphed at Versailles, in appearing to lament misfortunes and crimes which they had commanded ; and, in order to alarm the king, they afflicted him with them every day. " You rend my heart more and more," answered he at last, " by the account you give me of the misfortunes of Paris. It is not possible to believe that the orders which I have given to the troops are the cause of these evils." No, they were not so, for they were confined to the maintenance of order and peace.

At the same time the assembly most urgently solicited the king to remove the troops, to dismiss the new

ministers, and to recall those who preceded them. He began by ordering the retreat of those troops that were stationed in the Champ-de-Mars. But no orders were given for the departure of the other camps; and in Paris, which still believed itself threatened with an assault, the night between the 14th and 15th of July was again terrible. The people, become more savage, shuddered with fear and rage; the motions made at the Palais-Royal were lists of proscription. The next day, through a crowd of jarring opinions that agitated the national assembly, the voice of the Baron de Marguerit was favorably heard. "It is not," said he, "in circumstances so afflicting that we ought to debate. Every superfluous word is a crime against humanity. I persist in the motion, which I proposed yesterday, to send new deputies instantly to the king, who shall say to him: 'Sire, blood flows, and it is that of your subjects. Each day, each instant, adds to the frightful disorders that reign in the capital, and in the whole kingdom. Sire, the evil is at its height. It is by removing the troops from Paris and Versailles; it is by charging the deputies of the nation to carry words of peace in your name, that calm shall be restored. Yes, sire, there is one way worthy of you, and above all of your personal virtues; it is founded on the unalterable love of Frenchmen for their king; it is to place on this day all your confidence in the representatives of your faithful nation. We conjure you, sire, to join the national assembly without delay, in order to listen to truth, and advise with the natural council of your majesty on the measures best adapted to re-establish calm and union, and to secure the safety of the state.'"

A new deputation was going to wait on the king, when the Duke de Liancourt announced that the king

himself was coming, and that he was bringing with him every favorable disposition.

This news caused the most lively joy in the assembly, and all honest men were expressing it when Mirabeau hastened to repress it. "The blood of our brothers is flowing in Paris," said Mirabeau; "that good city is in the horrors of convulsions in order to defend its own liberty and ours; and can we abandon ourselves to joy before we know that calm, peace, and happiness are to be re-established there? Though all the ills of the people were to cease, should we be insensible to those they have already suffered? Let a mournful respect be the first reception given to the monarch by the representatives of an unhappy people. The silence of the people is the lesson of kings."

The vehemence of this speech had replunged the assembly into a melancholy silence, when the king appeared, and standing in the middle of the deputies who stood likewise to hear him, spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen, I have assembled you in order to consult you on the most important affairs of the state. There is no one more urgent, or that affects my heart more sensibly, than the frightful disorders that reign in the capital. The chief of the nation comes with confidence into the midst of its representatives to express to them his affliction, and invite them to discover means of restoring order and calm. I know that unjust prejudices have been encouraged; I know that some men have dared to publish that your persons were not in safety. Can it be necessary to quiet you on such culpable rumors, at once contradicted by my known character? Well, then, 'tis I who incorporate myself with my people, 'tis I who resign myself to you. Aid me on this occasion to secure the safety of

the state. I expect it from the national assembly. The zeal of the representatives of my people, met for the common safety, is to me a sure guaranty; and, depending on the fidelity and love of my subjects, I have given orders to the troops to remove from Paris and Versailles. I authorize, I request you to make known my intentions in the capital."

After the answer of the president, who finished by soliciting his Majesty, for the assembly, a constant, free, and immediate communication with his person, the king withdrew, when the whole assembly hastened to put itself in his suite, and formed his train from the hall to the palace.

This national train accompanying the king through a vast multitude that rent the air with acclamations and vows, while, from the balcony in front of the palace, the queen, embracing the dauphin, presented him to the people, and seemed to recommend him to the deputies of the nation, was, without doubt, a majestic sight. But the triumph was really that of the conspirators, to whom the king had just abandoned himself. The confidants of the revolution were still in small numbers. The rest were all sincere. But the crafty knaves, insulting at the bottom of their hearts the noble sincerity of the king, and the credulous simplicity of the multitude, applauded themselves for the rapid progress they were making towards dominion, and suffered these sentiments of joy and mutual love to exhale, because they knew they could suppress them when their purpose should be ripe.

The numerous deputation that was sent to Paris was received there, from the barrier to the town-hall, by an army of one hundred thousand men, differently armed with instruments of carnage; a scene that was



evidently prepared, as it were, to display the means they had of enforcing obedience if the king had not yielded; and with this terrible parade was mixed the joy of conquerors, and of that unbridled liberty which had produced only crimes, and with which even the best citizens suffered themselves to be intoxicated. A blockade, a siege, a famine, a massacre, were the black phantoms which had been employed to frighten them; and in seeing the troops retire that were supposed to be charged with the commission of these crimes, Paris thought it had nothing more to fear.

Thus, from that time, nothing was more easy than to re-establish order, and maintain the happiest understanding between the monarch and his people. The king desired nothing so much as to be loved; and at that price nothing was painful to him. The city of Paris had just appointed Bailly as its mayor, and La Fayette as commander of its militia. The king, who alone ought to have named to these two places, readily sanctioned the choices which the city had made. It had solicited Necker's recall; Necker was recalled, as well as Montmorin, La Luzerne, and St. Priest, who had shared his disgrace; and the new ministers prevented their dismissal by resigning. In fine, Paris, disordered anew by its perfidious agitators, desired that the king might come himself to the town-hall to dissipate its false alarms, and the king repaired thither (on the 17th of July, 1789) without any other guard than a few armed citizens of Paris and Versailles, in the midst of two hundred thousand men armed with scythes, pickaxes, guns, and lances, dragging cannon with them.

## BOOK XVIII.

THE 31st of July was a day remarkable for Necker's return, and for the kind of triumph with which he was honored at the Hôtel de Ville.

In returning from Basle, where he had received the two letters for his recall, one from the king, the other from the national assembly, Necker had seen on his road the excesses in which the populace everywhere indulged; he had endeavored to calm them, to spread on his passage milder feelings, and to inspire, wherever he went, a horror of injustice and violence.

The courts of justice were awed; the laws were without force, and the people despised them. All had heard the ancient edicts declared null; they now refused to pay the taxes, previously established; no one dared to compel them to it, and the faction made them believe that it had freed them from taxation.

In the mean time the treasury was quite empty, and its springs all nearly exhausted. Necker came to expose this penury to the assembly, and to request that it would authorize a loan of one million and a quarter at five per cent. This moderate interest was maliciously cavilled at; it was reduced to four; and the public now seeing in Necker only a minister opposed and disliked by the commons, the signal for his fall was the blow to his credit.

A patriotic contribution was the momentary resource resorted to by the assembly; and then, leaving the minister to torment himself with inquietude in order to provide for the exigencies of the state, it entered upon the work of a constitution which it authorized itself to

create, not only without the powers and consent of the nation, but in contempt of the express command which the nation itself had inserted in the instructions to its constituents, not to touch the ancient bases and fundamental principles of the existing monarchy.

On the 4th of August, the evening sitting had been marked by resolutions and sacrifices that ought to have pacified all men. The clergy and the nobility had, by acclamation, renounced their privileges. The king himself had consented without reserve to all the renunciations made and decreed in the sitting of the 14th of August. But he refused his assent plainly and simply to the ambiguous declaration of the rights of man, and to the nineteen articles of the constitution that had been presented to him. There were other articles to which all foresaw that he would refuse his sanction; and, although the *veto* which he reserved to himself was only suspensive, it was enough to arrest the march of the revolution. It became necessary to overcome this obstacle; and, if force were resorted to in order to conquer his opposition, the king might well form a resolution to which he had so long refused his concurrence.

This was indeed the true reason why the project of having the king at Paris was formed, and why thirty thousand seditious rebels were sent to Versailles (the 5th of October, 1789) with artillery at their head, and a crowd of those impure women who in all riots are made to march in front. The pretext of their mission was to go and complain of the dearness of bread.

I will not describe the brutality of that populace thus led to Versailles to carry off the king and his family. The trial of Du Châtelet has revealed that horrible mystery, that crime from which the assembly

in vain endeavored to clear the Duke d'Orleans and Mirabeau. The facts that relate to it are consigned to the memoirs of the time, which my children will read. They will there see, and shudder while they see, the faithful body-guards, who were forbidden by the king to fire on the people, massacred even to the threshold of the queen's chamber, and their heads carried on pikes under the windows of the palace; they will see that affrighted queen, trembling for the king and for her children, fly from her bed, which a moment afterwards was pierced with a hundred bayonets, and hasten to throw herself into the arms of the king, where she expected death; they will see this august pair, in the midst of a savage people, oppose to its rage the most magnanimous mildness, show it their children in order to move it to compassion, and ask what can be done to appease it. "Let the king come with us to Paris." This was the answer of the people, and the avowal of the plot which it was sent to execute.

As soon as he had arrived at the Tuileries with his family, the assembly declared that it could not remain separate from the person of the king; it came and established itself in Paris, on the 19th of October, 1789, and in these changes the good people fancied it beheld its safety.

The first act of the king at Paris was his acceptance of the first articles of the constitution, and the sanction of the rights of man.

These memoirs are not a history of the revolution. You will read it elsewhere, my children, and will see, after this epoch of the 19th of October, a long train of memorable events all easy to divine after the first victories of the successful party. The property of the

clergy was declared national on the 2d of November ; the creation of assignats on the 21st of December ; the quantity, form, and fabrication of this money determined on the 17th of April, 1790 ; nobility and all titles abolished on the 19th of June following ; the king's flight on the 21st of June, 1791 ; his return to Paris on the 25th ; finally, the acceptance of the whole constitution by the king on the 3d of September, and the promulgation of this act on the 28th of the same month.

The legislative assembly, installed on the 1st of October, 1791, followed and even exaggerated the spirit of the constituent assembly. I here again recall dates, in order to arrive at what is personal to me. On the 29th of November a decree was passed inviting the king to request the princes of the empire not to suffer the armaments of the fugitive princes. On the 14th of December, the king pronounces, on his declaration to these princes, a speech that is applauded. On the 1st of January, 1792, the decree of accusation is made against the brothers of Louis XVI. On the 1st of March happened the death of the Emperor Leopold. On the 29th of May, the assassination of Gustavus III., King of Sweden. On the 20th of April, declaration of war by France against the new King of Hungary and Bohemia. In the month of June the king refuses his sanction to two decrees ; and this refusal becomes the pretext of the insurrection of the faubourgs, that are sent in a vast tumultuous mass to the Tuileries. The king, who hears them threaten with savage cries and horrible imprecations to break open the doors of his apartment, orders that they may be opened. He presents himself with a calm air to hear their petition. They demand that he should sanction the decrees to

which he has refused his assent. "My sanction is free," answered the king; "and this is not the moment either to solicit or to obtain it."

Two days afterwards, in his proclamation against this act of violence, he declared that it would never be necessary to wrest from him his assent to whatever he should think just, and productive of public good; but that he would expose, if it were needful, his peace and even his safety in order to do his duty.

The 31st of July was marked by the arrival of the Marseillais at Paris; a kind of satellites that the revolutionists kept at their orders for great exertions. On the 3d of August, in the name of the sections of Paris, Pétion presents to the assembly a petition for the deposition of the king. On the 6th a report is studiously spread at the Tuileries that the king has resolved to fly. It was then that, by a too just presentiment of what was going to happen, my wife urged me to quit that country-house to which she had been so much attached, and to seek some retreat at a distance from Paris, where, in obscurity, we might breathe in peace.

We knew not whither to direct our steps. The tutor of our children decided our irresolution. It was he who assured us that in Normandy, where he was born, we should readily find a safe and peaceful asylum; but some time was requisite in order to procure it; and, on arriving at Evreux, we did not yet know where to lay our heads. The master of the inn where we alighted had, at a few paces from the town, in the hamlet of St. Germain, a pretty little house, seated on the borders of the Iton, and at the gate of the gardens of Navarre. He offered it to us. Having taken this place, we resolved to stay there till Charpentier's family should have found us a suitable dwelling nearer to Gaillon, his native place.

If, in the painful state in which our minds then were, any retreat could have been charming, that of this little hamlet would have been so; but we had scarcely arrived at Evreux when we learned the horrible event of the 10th of August.

At Paris, at the dawn of day, of that day which was to precede days yet more fatal, the squares and streets near the Tuileries were full of armed men with a train of artillery. It was the people of the faubourgs, supported by the band of Marseillais, who came to besiege the king in his palace.

That unfortunate prince had only a few Swiss-guards for his defence; and, though it has been said that there was in the garden of the Tuileries a crowd of brave and honest men who would have rallied round his person if he had chosen to show himself, he doubtless thought resistance either criminal or impossible; he was advised to repair with his family to the bosom of the national assembly; thither he fled.

In the meanwhile his brave Swiss soldiers, who, faithful to their orders, defended in the courts the approach to the palace, found themselves obliged to fire on the people. The people were repulsed, and the guards stood firm at their post, when they learned that the king had retired. Their courage then forsook them; and, having dispersed, they were almost all massacred in Paris.

The king was transferred to the prison of the tower of the Temple, with his wife, his children, and his sister, on the 13th of August.

It was in these days of terror and trembling that a man came to lodge near us, in the hamlet of St. Germain, who, as I supposed, was unknown to me. In his disguise, I had so much difficulty in recollecting

where I could have seen him that he was obliged to tell me his name. It was Lorry, the Bishop of Augers. Our recollection of each other was made tender by the misfortune of his situation, which he did not cease to support with considerable courage and firmness.

We soon became social friends; at his desire our table was in common; and in better times this accidental connection would have been reciprocally agreeable. Lodged together on the borders of a pretty river, in the most beautiful season of the year, having enchanting gardens and a superb forest for our walks, perfectly agreeing in our opinions, in our tastes, and in our principles, the remembrance of a world in which we had lived furnished us with subjects for conversation that were inexhaustible; but all these sweets were imbittered by the sorrows with which we were perpetually assailed.

The convention succeeded the legislative assembly on the 21st of September. Its first decree was the abolition of royalty.

At the same time, at the name of republican liberty, columns of volunteers ran to the armies; we found ourselves on their march, and they disturbed our repose. Besides, the approach of winter rendered the place where we were damp and unhealthy: we were obliged to quit it, and it was not without regret that we there left the good bishop. We retired, my wife and I, to Couvicourt. On the 11th of December the king appeared at the bar of the convention, and was interrogated. He asked for two lawyers, Tronchet and Target, for his counsel. Target refused to perform this sacred duty; the virtuous Malesherbes eagerly offered to take his place; this was consented to. Tronchet and Malesherbes asked to have the honest and



feeling De Seze to assist them, and that too was granted. On the 26th the king appeared for the second time, with his three defenders. De Seze addressed the assembly, but the king had not allowed him, in his defence, any oratorical parade. In obeying him, De Seze was but the more impassioned. On the 17th of January, 1793, the sentence of death was pronounced by a majority of 366 votes against 355. The king lodged an appeal to the nation. The appeal was rejected. On the 19th it was decided by a majority of 380 votes against 310, that there should be no delay in the execution of the sentence, and on the 21st, Louis XVI. had his head cut off on the "Place Louis XV." His confessor, at the foot of the scaffold, pronounced these ever-memorable words: "Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!" The king on the scaffold wished to address the people; Santerre, commanding the execution, and one of the leaders of the Faubourg St. Antoine, ordered the drums to beat, in order to stifle his voice. This execution was succeeded at a little interval of time by that of the three other prisoners of the Temple. On the 21st of January the king had perished on the scaffold. On the 16th of October the queen his wife shared the same fate. On the 21st of Floréal in the following year Elizabeth, the king's sister, terminated her innocent life under the same instrument of death; and on the 20th Prairial of the same year the dauphin died in the Temple.

## BOOK XIX.

THE French revolution might have pleaded an honorable example in ancient Rome. Louis XVI. had not one of the vices of the Tarquins, nor could he be accused either of pride or violence; without any other reason than that of being weary of its kings, France had the power to expel them and their whole race.

But the 21st of January, 1793, began, and could only begin, the reign of terror.

The revolutionists appeared to have conceived the vast infernal project of depraving a whole people, of associating vices and crimes, of propagating bad morals by bad laws, and of realizing by general corruption all that is attributed to the dark genius of human nature.

Religious opinions, the belief in a God, the idea of futurity, could curb the inclination to crime; the authority of the father could restrain the child; morality, by its principles of humanity, equity, and modesty, could regenerate a corrupt race. The project of depravation was directed against all these ties. We heard incredulity and blasphemy proclaimed; we saw libertinism affect to despise the idea of a God, sacrilege insult the altars, and crime pride itself on the hope of annihilation; we saw broken, all the ties of subordination that nature forms; children, made by the laws independent of their fathers, had only to wish for their death in order to be secure, without their consent and in spite of their will, of sharing their spoil. The conjugal knot was still the means of perpetuating domestic virtues, and of keeping in intimate union the husband, wife, and child: this tie was rendered fragile at will;

marriage became no more than a legal prostitution, a transient connection, which licentiousness, caprice, and inconstancy might form and dissolve as fancy varied. In fine, honor, public faith, decorum, the respect for self and for public opinion, and the veneration which the sacred image of virtue inspired, had offered a rallying point for souls susceptible of repentant feelings, and awake to the impressions of example. All this was destroyed. The impudence of vice, the audacity of shame, the emulation of license even to the most unbridled dissoluteness, were professed and erected into maxims of republican morality; and the system of Mirabeau, and of the Duke d'Orleans, that system, the aim of which was the dark corruption of a whole generation, seemed to reign throughout France. Thus was formed that revolutionary despotism, that Colossus of mire, kneaded and cemented with blood.

Retired as we were in our cottage of Ablonville, to which we had gone on quitting Couvicourt, we did not cease to dread the influence of so corrupted an age on our children; and we were employing every care to fortify them by a salutary and virtuous education, when the almost sudden death of their faithful tutor added a domestic affliction that completed the measure of our sufferings. A putrid fever of extreme malignity robbed us of that excellent young man. Our children must remember the grief which this loss caused us, and the fear we had lest they should suffer from the contagious air of a pestilential malady.

Their mother and I knew not what course to take, and our last resource was to go and seek refuge in some inn at Vernon, when the idea was suggested to us of asking asylum of a venerable old man, who, in the village of Aubevoie, at a little distance from ours,

occupied a house large enough to lodge us all, without any inconvenience to himself. This circumstance of my life has something romantic in it.

The old man, who, affected by our situation, was eager to receive us, was one of the monks who had been driven from the neighboring monastery of Carthusians. His name was Dom Honorat. He was older than I. His manners called to mind those of the anchorets of the Thebaid. This excellent man seemed to be sent by Heaven to edify and to console us. He breathed piety, but a piety all gentleness, indulgence, affection, and charity; a piety that was truly evangelic. He rarely allowed himself to dine with us; but, for an hour in the afternoon, and somewhat longer in the evening, he used to come and discourse to us of the great objects on which he incessantly meditated, of divine providence, of the immortality of the soul, of the life to come, of the morality of the gospel; and all this flowed naturally, simply, and from the bottom of his heart, with a lively faith and true feeling. It would have been cruel to express a doubt on subjects that gave consolation to his age and solitude. The soul of this good old man was perpetually in heaven; and it was so grateful to us to raise ourselves to heaven with him, that it would have been inhuman to have wished to make him descend. He revived us under the dejection into which we had been thrown by the death of the king; and in calling to recollection the words of the confessor, "Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven," "Yes," said he with confidence, "he is now before God, and certain I am that he is imploring pardon for his enemies." He thought the same of the virtuous martyrs of the 2d of September.

The alleviation which a pious hermit might feel in

his situation by associating with us was offensive to the mayor of Aubevoie. At the expiration of eighteen days he came to tell me that it was time for us to retire. Fortunately, the air of our house was purified; and, after having suitably testified our gratitude to him who had so well received us, we returned to our home.

This modest and humble dwelling was my own, I had bought it; but what a fatal change did it announce in our past fortune. I had just quitted, near Paris, a country-house that formed our delight, a garden plentifully stored; and that smiling retreat was changed, as by the wand of an eucharister, into a species of cottage very small and very decayed. It was here that we were obliged to endeavor to accommodate ourselves to our situation, and, if possible, to live as honorably in poverty as we had lived in days of ease. The trial was painful; my literary places were suppressed; the French Academy was soon to be destroyed; my pension as a man of letters, the fruit of my labors, was no longer of any value. The only solid property I still had was that little farm at Paray, which the prudent foresight of my wife had engaged me to purchase. I was obliged to lay down my carriage, and to turn away even the servant that my old age would have needed. But, in this narrow dwelling, where we had scarcely the indispensable necessities, my wife had the good understanding and the art to limit our expenses by simplifying our wants; and I can say that our own sad condition affected us but little in comparison with the public calamity. The care I gave to the instruction of my children, the tender part that their mother took in their moral education, and if I may be allowed to say it, the excellence

of their dispositions, were an inexpressible resource to us in our solitude. They consoled us for a misfortune which was not the misfortune of their age. At least we forebore to afflict them with it. The storm passes over their heads, used we to say, smiling on them ; and for them we have the hope of more calm and serene weather.

But the storm still increased ; we saw it extend itself over the whole nation ; it was not a civil war, for one of the two parties was passive and disarmed ; but on one side it was a jealous hatred, and on the other a melancholy terror.

One of the itinerant executioners of the faction had a guillotine engraven on his seal as an emblem. Another, at his dinner, had one of those instruments on his table, with which he amused himself by cutting off the head of a chicken that had been served up to him ; and while these made a mockery of the instrument of their barbarity, others boasted to the convention of their economy and diligence in the execution of its decrees. "Shooting is too tedious," one of them wrote to the convention, "and powder and ball are thereby expended. We have adopted the plan of putting them (the prisoners) in large boats in the middle of the river ; and at half a league from the town we sink the boat. Saint-Florent and the other places," added he, "are full of prisoners. They too shall have the patriotic baptism." I need not say what shudderings of horror we felt at the railleries of these monsters. The atrocities that made humanity tremble, the drownings of Carrier in the Loire, the cannonades with case-shot of Collot-d'Herbois at Lyons, obtained honorable mention in the journals of the convention. The infernal acts of Lebon in the Pas-de-Calais were

only "forms somewhat severe," which ought to be pardoned, and they were pardoned!

A formidable party was suddenly formed in the bosom of the convention against Robespierre; Tallien denounced him. He was instantly outlawed (the 9th of Thermidor), surprised, torn from the town-hall, whither he had flown, and dragged to the scaffold (on the 10th) where he had every day immolated so many innocent victims.

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## BOOK XX.

THE events which I have just recalled to memory have so occupied my fancy, that amid so many public calamities I have almost forgotten myself. The impression which this mass of misery made on me was indeed so lively and so deep, it was very natural that what concerned only myself should have very often been forgotten. Not but that I endeavored, by diversions of labor and study, to defend myself from these wearisome reflections whose continued action might have terminated in a dark melancholy, or in a fixity of ideas still more dangerous to the weak and frail organs of man.

When my imagination could be diverted by amusing reveries, I made new tales, less gay than those which I had written in the sunshine of my life and the smiling leisure of prosperity; but a little more philosophical, and in a tone that suited better with my age and the circumstances of the times.

When these dreams failed me, I exerted my reason, and tried to employ the time of my retreat and soli-

tude better, by composing, for the instruction of my children, an elementary course of study, in little "Treatises of Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics, and Morality," in which I collected with care what I had learned in my reading of different kinds, in order to transmit the fruits of it to them.

Sometimes, to amuse or instruct them by example, I employed our winter evenings in recounting to them by the fireside some little adventures of my youth; and my wife, perceiving that these recitals interested them, pressed me to write for them the events of my life.

It was thus that I became engaged to write these volumes of my Memoirs. I will freely confess, with Madame de Staël, that I have only painted myself in profile; but I wrote for my children.

These recollections were a real comfort and alleviation to me, inasmuch as they effaced, at least for moments, the sad images of the present, by the gentle dreams of the past.

I now, however, come to an epoch when the interest of public affairs seized on me more strongly and more closely than ever. By my duty as a citizen, I was called to that primary assembly of the canton of Gaillon where the new constitution was going to be proposed. This was the moment to observe the state and shades of national sentiment, and that observation was interesting; for the problem was to be submitted to discussion, and simultaneously solved by the majority of votes in all the primary assemblies throughout the republic.

In that where I was present, it was evident to me that two parties balanced each other.